

*Growing  
our future.*



COTTON  
AUSTRALIA

**ANNUAL REPORT**

2016-17

# ADVANCING AUSTRALIAN COTTON



## CONTENTS

Chairman's Report	04
CEO's Report	05
About Cotton Australia	08
Thank You to Our Levy Payers	09
Water Security	10
Workforce & Capacity Building	14
Electricity	18
Cotton to Market	20
myBMP & BCI	24
Essential Services for Growers	26
Research Direction & Stewardship	27
Spray Drift	28
Telecoms	30
Australian Cotton Conference	32
Mining & CSG	34
Education	36
Communications	38
Valleys Report	39
Cotton Australia Board	44
Cotton Australia Staff	45
Financial Summary	46

Cover image by: Debbie Little

Inside front cover image by: Sam and Lyn Hankin



# CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The past year has been a challenging one for our industry, with a cold start then leading into one of the hottest and driest summers in recorded history, but I am pleased to report that Cotton Australia has made significant strides in the past 12 months. It is fair to say we have weathered the challenges put to us as an industry and growers.

As you know, Cotton Australia is in the fourth year of a five-year Strategic Plan. The original Strategic Plan set out a path to achieve many things in the four key pillars that form the organisation's core - Policy & Advocacy, Research Direction, Stewardship, and Community & Capacity. We have already begun the process to set the next five-year Strategic Plan, which will involve wide consultation with the industry - and, in particular, our growers - so stay tuned.

The Board is proud of the work by Cotton Australia's team in the past 12 months, and I would like to point out some of the most important achievements.

Without doubt, one of the most important areas of work has been in water policy. Cotton Australia worked with a very impressive cadre of irrigator groups and other farmer representatives to initiate the #MoreThanFlow campaign, which successfully drove people to make submissions to the Murray Darling Basin Authority regarding its Northern Basin Review.

Cotton Australia also worked with partners to bring a sensible outcome to the Backpacker Tax issue, and is now implementing a broad workforce program which will directly benefit growers.

As always, Cotton Australia has protected the important commitment to matched government funding for research and development. Research and development in our industry is one of the most important roles for Cotton Australia - providing research direction, ideas and resolution to issues raised by our growers, such as Silver Leaf Whitefly resistance, Defoliation efficacy, and Verticillium disease, which have been commonly discussed in recent meetings with CRDC.

The organisation's policy team has also made gains in the areas of electricity reform and telecommunications services, which drastically need to be improved to access better technology.

In addition, our Cotton To Market program has also made great strides in the past 12 months, convincing more and

more throughout the cotton supply chain to preference our natural fibre. I have been fortunate to represent all the Australian cotton growers in promoting myBMP in a global sustainable production system through Better Cotton.

This is our first season under the Bollgard 3 planting window, and I would like to thank the TIMS Committee for its hard work and achievements on behalf of the industry, which have allowed a lot more flexibility for our growers. I would like to promote to the industry the importance of good management of refuges and communication within your communities and the industry.

While Cotton Australia's efforts have borne much fruit this year, it must be pointed out that none of it would be possible without the support of growers who contribute the voluntary levy. To those growers who do contribute the levy, I thank you. Without your support, Cotton Australia could not deliver on its promise to provide crucial advocacy on behalf of growers and the industry, nor deliver essential services.

You will find the organisation's financial statement at the rear of this Annual Report. Our financial position is strong, and so the Board has decided to maintain the voluntary levy at \$1.50 per bale for the coming season.

To those member representatives who give their time and attention to attend Cotton Australia's General Meetings, please accept my thanks and gratitude. Without your feedback, Cotton Australia could not deliver on its promise to cotton growers.

Finally, I thank my fellow Board members, our CEO Adam Kay and all of the dedicated Cotton Australia team. You have all worked incredibly hard on behalf of growers over the past year, and the results are there for all to see.

I look forward to working with you all in the coming year, so that we may achieve even more on behalf of growers.

Best wishes for the coming season

**Simon Corish**  
Chairman, Cotton Australia



# CEO'S REPORT

It turned out to be a tough year for our growers and industry. Despite reasonable water availability in many areas, the extreme temperatures in January and February damaged the raingrown crop as well as taking a toll on irrigated crops. Despite this, the industry has still produced more than 4 million bales and generated \$2.5 billion in export income for our nation.

I am pleased and proud of the gains your peak grower body has made in the last year across all areas of our portfolio - Policy and Advocacy, Research Direction, Stewardship and Community and Capacity.

There have been successes in the area of water policy in regard to the Murray Darling Basin Plan and local management arrangements (LMA) in Queensland, as well as a plan to resolve Broken Hill's water supply that will have important implications for many growers. All these successes revolve around collaboration and coordination with other irrigator groups at valley, state and national levels.

Cotton Australia has also worked on ongoing advocacy with other partners to ensure the retention of matching R&D funding and the fuel tax credit scheme (diesel fuel rebate).

Persistent advocacy in the arena of electricity costs produced a win for growers, when the Australian Government directed the ACCC to review retail electricity pricing. Cotton Australia and its associates also continue to pursue practical programs to reduce growers' electricity bills through other means, such as tariff trials and efficiency workshops.

In the area of workforce and capacity building, Cotton Australia partnered with the NFF and QFF – among others – to successfully resolve the Backpacker Tax issue, securing a win for common sense that produced a tangible result for growers reliant on seasonal labour. We are also in the midst of rolling out an industry-wide workforce plan which will give cotton farm enterprises and others in the industry a significant boost. Our education program is continuing to grow, going from strength to strength.

Our Cotton to Market program continues to accelerate, bringing benefits to the industry by growing the number of Australian and global brands and retailers committed to specifying Australian cotton in their supply chains. With a very modest investment, along with government support through an Export Market Development Grant, this program has generated many tangible outcomes as well as a lot of positive media for the industry.

We were again proud to run (in conjunction with ACSA) the major industry event, the 18th Australian Cotton Conference, which attracted a record number of growers and delegates. The conference continues to grow and highlights information sharing and collaboration, which continues to be a key strength across our industry.

Providing advice on the direction of research to the Cotton Research and Development Corporation is a key role for Cotton Australia and I want to thank the growers who attended the many local research priority workshops our team ran, and especially those who represent their Cotton Grower Association at our General Meetings where R&D advice is debated and then drawn together.

I close by thanking the dedicated Cotton Australia team, who have worked so very hard on behalf of growers and the industry over the past 12 months. Your sterling efforts are recognised by myself, the Board and our industry.

I hope to see you at a Cotton Australia event soon.

**Adam Kay**  
Chief Executive Officer

# 2016-17

COTTON AUSTRALIA AND PARTNERS SECURE WINS FOR GROWERS



## SPRAY DRIFT

Led a multi-industry campaign to help reduce drift and damage to crops.



## COMMUNICATIONS REACH EXTENDED

Increased our presence in traditional media and social media, and increased website traffic.



## MYBMP GROWTH

Significantly boosted the number of growers using myBMP.



## PROTECTED GROWER RIGHTS

Improved landholder protections and strengthened representation for Qld growers.



## GUIDED CRUCIAL R&D FUNDING

Helped steward approximately \$22 million in additional R&D investment for 2017-18 across 200 new projects.



## MURRAY DARLING BASIN PLAN CAMPAIGN

Stewarded the #MoreThanFlow campaign, rallying communities to take action on the Northern Basin Review.



## WORKFORCE WIN

Successfully campaigned for a common sense outcome to the Backpacker Tax.





### **ELECTRICITY PRICING REFORM**

ACCC directed to review  
electricity prices.



### **RESISTANCE MANAGEMENT PLAN WIN**

Helped secure an  
extended planting  
window for Bollgard 3.



### **AWARDS, CONFERENCE A HIT**

Record number of  
Conference delegates,  
celebrated excellence  
and innovation via the  
Cotton Industry Awards.



### **BOOSTED THE INDUSTRY'S BRAND TO CONSUMERS**

Grew Cotton Classroom reach  
by almost 20%.



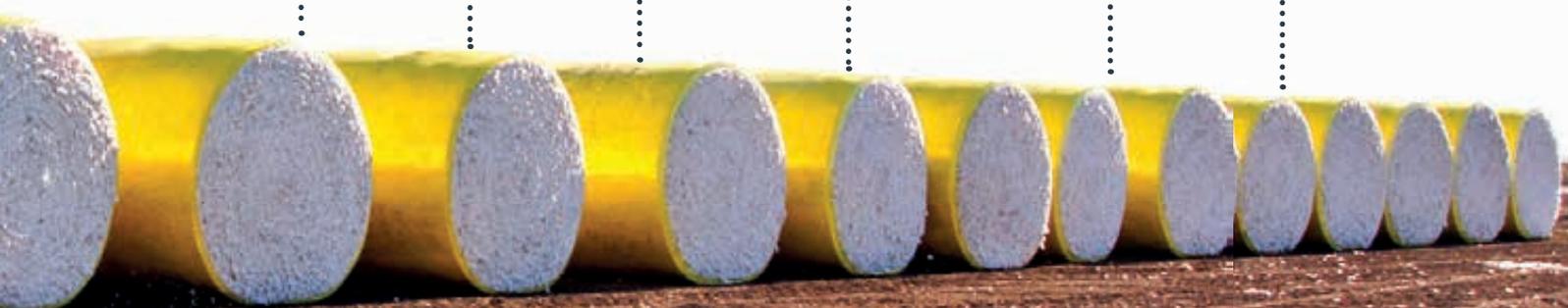
### **BETTER COTTON INITIATIVE**

Helped growers achieve  
premiums for BCI cotton.



### **PROMOTION SUCCESS**

Worked to secure foreign  
markets for Australian  
cotton growers through  
the Cotton To Market,  
Cotton LEADS™ and BCI  
programs. Prompted  
Aussie & international  
brands to prefer  
Australian cotton.



# ABOUT COTTON AUSTRALIA

Cotton Australia is the peak body for Australia's cotton producers, supporting about 1200 cotton farming families in NSW, Queensland and now into Victoria. The organisation strives to foster a world class agricultural industry that's sustainable, valued for its economic and social contributions and produces very high quality cotton in demand around the globe.

Cotton Australia exists for its growers. Its resources, human and financial, are directed to initiatives and programs that benefit cotton producers directly and indirectly.

For more than 40 years, Cotton Australia has grown alongside an industry that demands the highest standards, and during that time has delivered a series of sustained wins for its growers.

Cotton Australia was established in 1972 (as the Australian Cotton Foundation) and in 2009 merged with the Australian Cotton Growers Research Association

(also established in 1972). Led by a Board of 10 cotton growers and ginners, the organisation is funded by a voluntary levy paid by growers on each bale of cotton produced.

Cotton Australia provides a united voice for cotton growers across research and development, stewardship, natural resource management, biosecurity and cotton production issues such as water. This is achieved through policy and advocacy, education, communication and grower services.

Cotton Australia has offices in Sydney, Narrabri and Toowoomba and part-time field staff based in most of the cotton production regions. The activities of Board and Staff are directed by an Annual Operating Plan, underpinned by a 2013-18 Strategic Plan that sets out priorities and core areas of business.

Image by: Beth Burnett





COTTON  
AUSTRALIA

# THANK YOU TO OUR LEVY PAYERS

Cotton Australia's success and effectiveness is only possible  
with the support of our levy payers.

To those growers that contributed the full Cotton Australia levy  
for the 2015-16 year, we thank you for your continued support.

To view a full list of Cotton Australia levy payers, please  
visit: [www.cottonaustralia.com.au/about/our-levy-payers](http://www.cottonaustralia.com.au/about/our-levy-payers)



It has been an enormous year for advocacy on water security, with the running of the massive #MoreThanFlow campaign, and progress on Murray Darling Basin Plan complementary measures and water infrastructure projects.

# WATER SECURITY

WATER WINS SECURED FOR COTTON GROWERS, BUT THERE IS MUCH WORK STILL TO BE DONE

## CHALLENGES FOR THE COMING YEAR

- Continue to seek a finalisation of the Basin Plan that minimises further water entitlement acquisition, and social and economic impacts – including a reduction from the MDBA’s recommended 320GL recovery target and the full 650GL of SDL adjustment measures for the Southern Basin – while optimising environmental outcomes
- Continue lobbying both the Federal and Queensland Governments to support projects and opportunities to increase water availability.
- Complete the roll-out of Local Management Arrangements in Queensland

- **The MDBA has advised the Minister it intends to recommend a reduction in water targets, but the campaign will continue**
- **#MoreThanFlow campaign a success, engages communities across the Basin**
- **Progress on complementary measures, water infrastructure and securing water governance**

## MURRAY DARLING BASIN PLAN: HUGE CAMPAIGN STIRS COMMUNITIES TO ACTION

As this Annual Report went to press, the Basin Ministers had been advised that the MDBA intended to recommend to the Federal Minister that the water recovery target for the north be reduced by 70GL to 320GL, the latest milestone in the long history of regulation for the Murray Darling system.

From late in 2016, an alliance of community and irrigator groups fought hard under the ‘#MoreThanFlow’ banner to successfully bring the issue of the Northern Basin

Review to the attention of regulators and politicians. The members of this alliance were AgForce, Barwon-Darling Water, Border Rivers Food & Fibre, Cotton Australia, Gwydir Valley Irrigators Association, Macquarie River Food & Fibre, Namoi Water, National Farmers’ Federation, National Irrigators’ Council, NSW Farmers, NSW Irrigators’ Council, Queensland Farmers’ Federation and Smart Rivers. (More info: see break-out box).

Our alliance’s message was simple : “Enough is enough, stop the water recovery at the current level of 278GL. Invest the funds that would have been spent on further water recovery on complementary measures,” such as reducing cold water pollution and improving fish passage.

The coordinated effort of the alliance built on the great work of all the member organisations, other community based groups and individuals to highlight the impact of a plan that only focused on adding more water.

The #MoreThanFlow campaign convinced hundreds of business owners, farmers and community leaders to lodge submissions to the MDBA, sending a clear message to the regulators in Canberra.



## ADVOCACY ACHIEVEMENTS THROUGH TEAMWORK

Cotton Australia acknowledges that the wins of the past year in the water security space have been the collective effort of our industry.

We work very closely with other organisations and groups, and very rarely can an organisation claim sole credit for a positive outcome.

Cotton Australia's policy setting is guided by its members, primarily the Cotton Grower Associations, and Cotton Australia works very closely with these members to achieve its policy outcomes. We also work very closely with a wide number of valley or catchment-based groups. These include Smartrivers, Central Downs Irrigators Limited (CDIL), Border Rivers Food and Fibre (BRFF), Gwydir Valley Irrigators Association (GVIA), Lachlan Valley Water, Namoi Water, Macquarie River Food and Fibre (MRFF) and Barwon-Darling Water.

In addition we are formal members of National Farmers' Federation (NFF), National Irrigators Council (NIC), News South Wales Irrigators' Council (NSWIC) and Queensland Farmers' Federation (QFF).

Furthermore, on an issue-by-issue basis, we work with state farming organisations such as, NSW Farmers and AgForce. In addition, we have close relationships with, and support where appropriate, groups like Fairbairn Water, Theodore Water and the St George Irrigation Scheme.

While the outcome of the Murray-Darling Basin Plan Northern Basin Review is yet to be finalised, the benefits of being able to articulate a unified position was highlighted through the #MoreThanFlow campaign, which demonstrated the value of a single message coming from a collective of groups, which in this case included – Smartrivers, BRFF, GVIA, Namoi Water, MRFF, Barwon-Darling Water, NSWIC, NIC, AgForce, NFF, QFF and Cotton Australia.

Another great example of united achievement was having the NSW Government commit to securing an alternative water supply for Broken Hill. This result was driven by a joint effort from BRFF, GVIA, Namoi Water, Barwon-Darling Water, the Cotton Grower Associations and Cotton Australia.

Positive policy outcomes are often only achieved where an industry sector can demonstrate a high level of unity and co-operation, and Cotton Australia is extremely fortunate to be in a position to work cooperatively with such a wide range of talented organisations, and we would like to publicly thank them all for their generosity and talent.



Cotton Australia's own Communications team worked hard to bring the harsh realities of the MDBP's impact on regional communities to a wide audience. They travelled hundreds of kilometres to conduct video interviews with business and community leaders in towns throughout the Northern Basin.

The campaign, and subsequent submissions, were in response to the MDBA's draft recommendation made in late 2016.

The MDBA's headline proposal in its recommendation was to adjust the Murray Darling Basin Plan (MDBP) to require a total of 320GL of water to be recovered. Although a reduction from the 390GL target for 2019 that has been in place for some time, it still represents an increase on the 278GL that has been recovered to date, and which has already caused significant harm to irrigators and communities affected by the Plan.

To their credit, the MDBA recommendation also included the application of a 'toolkit' of non-flow measures that would be important to achieving environmental outcomes. (See 'Complementary measures' below).

However, Cotton Australia argues the MDBA's recommendation falls short, and fails both the farmers and the 21 communities affected across northern NSW and southern Queensland. In summary, Cotton Australia believes that water recovery should stop at its current levels, and the funds that have been allocated for further water acquisition should be re-invested in complementary measures including cold water pollution mitigation, carp control and improved native fish passage.

While this phase of the Northern Review is now over, our campaign to make managing the Northern Basin about #MoreThanFlow is far from complete.

Depending on the substance of the MDBA's

recommendation, Federal Parliament may have the opportunity to pass judgement on the recommendation in August, at the earliest, however that may extend to late 2017 or even early 2018.

The MDBP's Southern Basin also received some attention in the past year, with the passage of changes to the Water Act through Federal Parliament in November 2016.

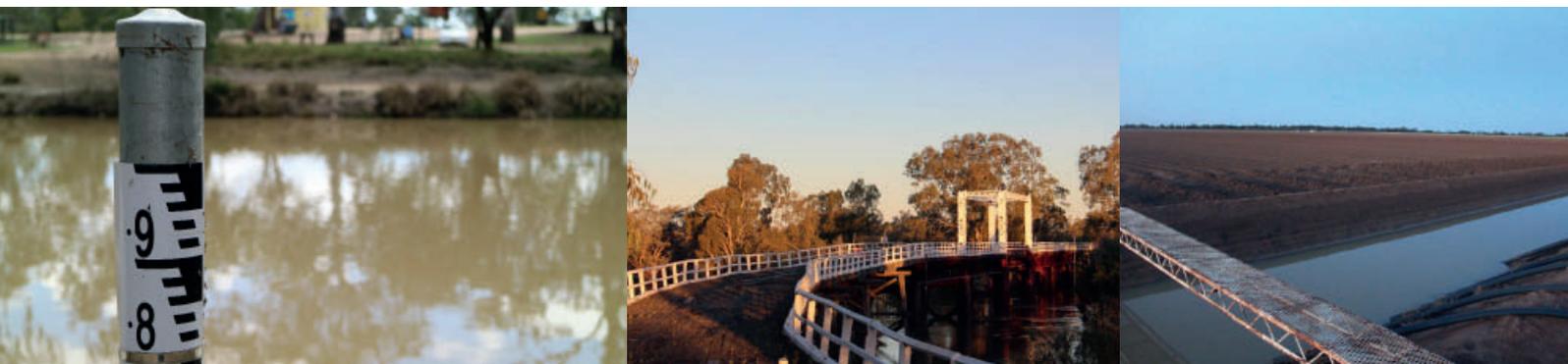
The legislation granted an additional year to find water-saving projects to implement the MDBP, and changes the operation of the Sustainable Diversion Limit (SDL) Adjustment Mechanism with the intention of eliminating the need for further water purchases in the Southern Basin.

The changes allow an additional 12 months to scope out water-saving projects, with the focus shifting on the states to do the detailed planning required to make these projects a reality in order to deliver the full 650 gegalitres of SDL adjustments. Cotton Australia has been working hard with other irrigator groups to ensure the full 650GL of offset measures are realised.

Should the projects be delivered, the MDBP could be implemented without resorting to additional water entitlement buybacks, which Cotton Australia has strongly argued against in the past.

Cotton Australia thanked Deputy PM and Minister for Agriculture & Water Resources, Barnaby Joyce, for driving the changes, and also acknowledged the bipartisan support that resulted in the changes passing through Parliament.

Growers in both the Northern and Southern Basins can rest assured that Cotton Australia and its allies will continue to campaign on behalf of farmers, the industry and the communities we support.



## COMPLEMENTARY MEASURES, WATER INFRASTRUCTURE AND GOVERNANCE: PROGRESS ON THE GROUND

While the campaign to engage with the MDBP Northern Review consumed the bulk of Cotton Australia's energy in the water security space in the past year, we are happy to report that long-term advocacy by it and other irrigation industry organisations produced wins for growers in other areas.

In May 2017 Cotton Australia welcomed the announcement of a nationally coordinated approach to eliminating the common carp from inland rivers. The \$15 million National Carp Control Plan has been allocated as part of this year's Federal Budget, and will be supported by a Ministerial task force which will be established to coordinate efforts over federal and state jurisdictions.

The most important element of the initiative is the creation of a National Carp Control Plan that intends to release the carp control virus by the end of 2018 – potentially the single biggest positive towards improving the environmental health of Murray Darling Basin river systems.

This program is a great example of a complementary measure with good environmental, social and economic outcomes.

Cotton Australia has long lobbied for a suite of complementary measures in the Murray Darling Basin, including carp control, and is pleased to see advocacy taking effect in this space.

The carp announcement followed another win for NSW growers in December 2016, when the State Government

announced that WaterNSW had been appointed to build, own and operate a 270km water pipeline from the Murray River to Broken Hill. Construction of the pipeline is expected to begin this year and be complete by late 2018.

Broken Hill's water supply has been under pressure for a long time and the pipeline will help drought-proof Broken Hill which, in turn, will provide more flexibility for managing the Menindee Lakes and also allow optimal use of water resources in the system for environmental and irrigation purposes. The pipeline is a win for the community, the environment and irrigating farmers, and a solution Cotton Australia and its allies have long lobbied for.

In Queensland, Cotton Australia has been diligently working on several infrastructure and governance projects to benefit irrigating farmers. Advocacy has focused on advancing two major projects – the utilisation of additional entitlement on the Dawson River in Central Queensland, and the Brisbane-to-Darling Downs recycled water pipeline, which could bring in excess of 100,000 megalitres of high security water onto the Downs each year.

In addition, Cotton Australia worked behind the scenes to re-boot the transition to Local Management Arrangements (LMA), which affect farmers in three cotton-growing districts in the state, after it was stalled in the wake of the Queensland election. Cotton Australia is hoping LMA will be successfully transitioned in the next 12 months.

# WORKFORCE & CAPACITY BUILDING

ENHANCING OUR INDUSTRY'S CAPACITY, PROTECTING  
OUR WORKFORCE

## CHALLENGES FOR THE COMING YEAR

- Ensure any further changes to migration policies do not negatively impact the industry and, where possible, work with the Australian Government to safeguard the industry's access to overseas workers to supplement the workforce
- Continue to fund, and guide, investment in leadership and training programs
- Work with industry and government to deliver the cotton workforce plan

- **Backpacker Tax resolved following coordinated campaign, ending 18 months of political games**
- **Cotton Australia and industry sponsors invest in future and established leaders to boost the industry's capacity**
- **Working with industry to roll-out a cotton workforce plan to benefit growers on-farm**

## BACKPACKER TAX RESOLVED FOLLOWING COORDINATED CAMPAIGN

Finally, the issue of working holiday-maker taxation was resolved in December 2016, ending 18 months of political games.

We worked with our allies to ensure the issue remained firmly on the political agenda until the compromise was reached. Cotton Australia was a part of a coordinated campaign with the National Farmers' Federation, the Queensland Farmers' Federation and many other allied groups across farming and tourism in prosecuting the case for a sensible rate of 15%.

The Government's original proposal, if implemented, would have taxed backpackers as non-residents from July 1, 2016, removing access to the tax-free threshold and requiring working holiday visa holders to pay 32.5 cents for every dollar earned.

To build the case against the proposed 32.5% tax rate, Cotton Australia participated in a number of Government reviews, lodged numerous submissions, attended face-to-face consultations on behalf of growers, lobbied political leaders to find a resolution and compiled three grower case studies to highlight the impact of the tax on the Australian cotton industry.

The organisation also participated in the NFF's online campaign via the Australian Farmers platform, kept the issue in the media to pressure political leaders, and rallied our allies on social media to seek a resolution. Almost 50,000 people signed an online petition to help stop the proposed 32.5% tax.

The 15% tax rate helps restore Australia's competitiveness as a destination for backpackers.

Importantly, certainty was restored for Australian growers, who rely on seasonal labour at critical times of the season, and rural communities that rely on agriculture.



Image by: Eve Jeffery

## COTTON GAP PROGRAM CREATES COTTON PATHWAYS

The inaugural Cotton Gap program, facilitated by Cotton Australia, successfully connected six school-leavers taking a 'gap year' with cotton growers seeking operational staff.

The program assists growers with meeting labour requirements and attracts new entrants to one of Australia's most innovative and forward-thinking agricultural industries.

Employers are supported to ensure they are meeting their workplace health and safety and employment requirements (through myBMP) and ongoing support from Cotton Australia. Additionally, entry-level training was delivered for the new industry entrants.

The program will be rolled out again in 2017.

## INDUSTRY-WIDE WORKFORCE PLAN

The Australian cotton industry's on-farm workforce strategy was endorsed in 2016, setting a clear plan for delivering on priority industry on-farm workforce needs.

Cotton Australia is now implementing the industry's workforce strategy, with key activities including the WHS workshops and working to incorporate People in Ag into the myBMP system.

Cotton Australia Workforce and Training Co-ordinator Rebecca Fing continues to drive key workforce activities alongside Cotton Australia's regional managers.

## BOOSTING OUR INDUSTRY'S CAPACITY

Each year, Cotton Australia and its partners support a number of leadership programs to increase the capacity of our cotton workforce now and into the future. The courses sponsored by Cotton Australia are vital to build the skills of emerging leaders, helping them to acquire the practical skills and knowledge they need.

Cotton Australia and the Cotton Research and Development Corporation (CRDC) continue to support:

- The Australian Future Cotton Leaders Program for 15 emerging cotton industry leaders to develop leadership knowledge, skills and experience
- The Peter Cullen Water and Environment Trust's Science-to-Policy Leadership Program for individuals currently working in the science, policy or management of water. Zara Lowien (Moree) and Tim Napier (Border Rivers) were sponsored for the 2016 program
- Nuffield Australia Farming Scholarships for exemplary cotton growers or farm managers between the ages of 28-40 with a research interest. Daniel Kahl (Wee Waa) was sponsored for the 2017 program.

Cotton Australia, the CRDC and Auscott Ltd also support the Australian Rural Leadership Program for established leaders currently working in or for the cotton industry.



## TRAINING FOR EMPLOYEES AND EMPLOYERS

Again this season, Cotton Australia ran a series of workshops to help growers in Queensland understand their legal and industry obligations in terms of work health and safety (WHS) and human resources. The workshops – run at no cost to attendees – were made possible with funding and support from Cotton Australia and WorkCover Queensland.

In collaboration with TAFE NSW, Cotton Australia help secure \$30,000 in funding for 40 participants to undertake training in Moree.

## \$14.7 MILLION TRAINING FUNDING SECURED FOR NSW GROWERS

The NSW Government has announced a \$14.7 million investment in training for the cotton and grain industries across the state. The funding is part of the NSW Government's Ag Skilled strategy, developed in close consultation with Cotton Australia and the GRDC and will be allocated over a three-year period under the NSW Government's Smart and Skilled training program.

AgSkilled will fund training around four key pillars: safety, production, technology and business.

Cotton Australia is currently undertaking a training needs analysis of the cotton industry to ensure training meets the needs of growers. Training will commence from June 2017 onwards.

## PROMOTING CAREERS IN AGRICULTURE

The People In Ag website was launched in December 2016 to promote careers and career pathways in agricultural industries, including cotton. The website provides information on employment law, news, career management and professional practice – built for all employees and employers within agriculture. The Australian cotton industry was represented on the new website's steering committee by Cotton Australia's Rebecca Fing and CRDC's Ian Taylor.



# ELECTRICITY

PROGRESS MADE, BUT THE PATH TO REFORM CONTINUES

WORKING TO REDUCE ONE OF THE BIGGEST INPUT COSTS FOR GROWERS

## CHALLENGES FOR THE COMING YEAR

- Work with our partners to advocate for electricity and energy market reform, with the objective of overturning years of gouging and restoring equity to electricity pricing structures
- Manage recommendations flowing from the Finkel Review into the modernisation of the grid
- Explore and promote practical methods for growers to reduce electricity costs, particularly through higher efficiency, alternative energy sources and leveraging options for government funding mechanisms

- **Persistent advocacy on inequitable tariff structures produced a win for growers – an ACCC inquiry into electricity retail pricing**
- **Regional support package for Queensland growers helps growers improve efficiency**

Cotton Australia has worked hard on the issue of energy pricing, understanding it is one of the key input costs for growers.

## REGULATORY REFORM

After a frustrating year of ‘regulatory tennis’ in 2015-16, growers were handed a win in late March 2017, when the Australian Government directed the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) to review retail electricity prices. The inquiry followed a joint lobbying effort by Cotton Australia and the NSW Irrigators’ Council, which called on COAG’s Energy Council to deliver on its commitment to provide low-cost and reliable energy.

With the ACCC review underway, Cotton Australia’s attention will now turn to the Finkel Review of the National Electricity Market, the results of which were handed to COAG as this report went to press. Cotton

Australia and its allies will analyse the Finkel Review in detail and then make its submission to the Federal Government.

Growers in Queensland also secured another win when the Queensland Government announced a \$10 million regional business support package as part of its response to the Queensland Productivity Commission’s Pricing Inquiry Final Report.

The package allocated funding designed to allow energy users to better understand their energy usage and billing, which would theoretically allow users to adjust practices to minimise costs. Included was funding for meters and impact trials for users to better understand the impact of bills under different tariff options, promotion of energy audit services, and a trial of co-contributions for business customers on transitional and obsolete tariffs to invest in operational changes and infrastructure.

Although Cotton Australia welcomed the announcement, it pointed out that the package could not be relied on to reverse the long-term trend of persistent price rises, and also argued the Queensland Government could do more to guarantee lower energy costs for growers.

Cotton Australia is seeking a role in developing how these programs are targeted and deployed.



The organisation has not restricted its advocacy to government and regulators – Cotton Australia staff have also participated in Essential Energy’s Customer Advocacy Group, an important method of ensuring that the electricity supplier understands the needs and concerns of growers.

## PRACTICAL PROGRAMS

In addition to its work on electricity policy Cotton Australia has engaged in a number of programs to help growers reduce electricity bills through practical measures. These have included on-farm studies (conducted with NSW Irrigators’ Council and NSW Office of Environment & Heritage) examining how irrigators have successfully reduced energy costs through efficiency measures. The result of these has been a series of case studies and fact sheets with valuable information growers can apply on-farm. These are now available on the CottonInfo website.

Cotton Australia also coordinated a series of energy efficiency workshops in Queensland.

Together, the case studies, fact sheets and workshops provided an important suite of learning opportunities that have helped growers improve their awareness of energy use on farm, where opportunities exist for improved energy efficiency and circumstances that have shown positive payback periods for investment in renewable energy.

In addition, Cotton Australia promoted the joint Queensland State Government and Ergon Energy Ag Tariff Trial. The trial is designed to help farmers and irrigators prepare for the loss of the transitional tariffs 62, 65 and 66 in 2020, and to help Ergon better understand the potential to offer controlled load and seasonal demand tariffs.

The trial on offer comprised three components growers could opt for:

1. A ‘controlled load tariff’: suitable for growers able to manage an interruptible electricity supply
2. A ‘seasonable demand tariff’: suitable for growers able to minimise pumping during peak consumer hours
3. A ‘load profile’ study: suitable for growers unwilling to commit to a trial tariff, but keen to record detailed information to help them make a more informed choice

More information on the tariffs is available at: [www.ergon.com.au/agtarrifftrial](http://www.ergon.com.au/agtarrifftrial)

# COTTON TO MARKET

SECURING MARKETS FOR AUSTRALIAN COTTON NOW AND INTO THE FUTURE

## CHALLENGES FOR THE COMING YEAR

- Work with the cotton supply chain to meet the global sustainability challenges for cotton
- Deliver value to Australia's growers by influencing the supply chain and sustainability strategies of brands and retailers to include Australian cotton

- **Growing number of Australian and global brands and retailers committed to Australian cotton in their supply chains**
- **Cotton Australia brokers partnership with the Australian Government and BCI to fund training for Pakistani cotton growers**

## DELIVERING VALUE FOR AUSTRALIAN COTTON GROWERS

Year on year, Cotton Australia's Cotton to Market program continues to create value for Australian cotton growers. This comes at a time when an increasing number of Australian and international brands and retailers have set bold targets to move their cotton supply chain to sustainable and responsibly-produced raw materials. As growers know best, our industry has worked hard on our environmental and sustainable production credentials for almost 30 years.

The Cotton to Market program delivers vital messages and information about the Australian cotton industry's environmental, social and sustainability credentials and ongoing commitment to continuous improvements to key decision-makers sourcing raw materials.

A number of Cotton to Market activities attracted a rebate through Austrade's Export Market Development Grant program.

## ENGAGING WITH AUSTRALIAN BRANDS AND RETAILERS

Brands here and overseas are now recognising the significant changes made to farming practices in Australia. Locally, Cotton Australia has worked with a number of major companies who are now sourcing, or a looking at sourcing, and promoting Australian cotton as part of their product lines. These include Target Australia, Kmart, Rivers, Rockmans and Jeanswest. In the coming seasons, additional major Australian brands and retailers will launch 100% Australian cotton lines as interest in Cotton to Market multiplies.

## COTTON LEADS™ PROGRAM SWELLS TO 460+ PARTNERS

The Cotton LEADS™ program, jointly established by the Australian and United States cotton industries, has recruited more than 460 partners, including some of the world's leading fashion and textile brands, retailers and manufacturers. In April 2016, more than 130 of these partners attended a Cotton LEADS™ Conference in Hong Kong to deepen their understanding of sustainability efforts of the Cotton LEADS™ founding countries. The Australian cotton industry was represented by Emerald (Queensland) cotton grower and Cotton Australia Board member, Nigel Burnett, and Nevertire (NSW) grower, Tony Quigley, directly connecting cotton growers with end-users.



Target representatives Neil Ainsworth and Anna Milner tour the Auscott Narrabri gin

## BETTER COTTON INITIATIVE (BCI) CONTINUES TO EXPAND

By supporting growers with myBMP on-farm, Cotton Australia continues to assist growers to access premium markets for cotton grown on myBMP-certified farms via its involvement in the Better Cotton Initiative (BCI). With around 14% of the world's cotton now qualifying as Better Cotton and increasing demand from brands, BCI is another way for Australia's cotton growers to take advantage of on-farm sustainability.

Australian cotton growers must do three things to qualify as a BCI grower:

- Achieve myBMP certification
- Pay the full Cotton Australia levy
- Register with BCI through Cotton Australia

Cotton Australia will continue to manage the industry's relationship with BCI. Australian growers are represented on the BCI Council (its global overseeing Board) by Cotton Australia Chairman Simon Corish.

In August 2016, key partners of the global cotton supply chain – including global brands Nike Inc. and H&M, domestic retailer Target Australia and representatives from BCI – joined forces with growers and Cotton Australia to discuss the Australian cotton industry's sustainability journey at the Australian Cotton Conference.

As part of membership of BCI, Cotton Australia brokered a new partnership between BCI and the Australian Government's Business Partnerships Platform aid initiative. \$500,000 has been granted by the Government to BCI, with these funds matched by global brands and then invested in training for Pakistan's cotton growers. Tens of thousands of cotton farmers in Pakistan will receive vital environmental training to improve production practices. The training will improve the overall standards of global cotton

production and increase the world's sustainable cotton supply, and Cotton Australia believes it is important to help other cotton-producing countries improve, because it recognises we are part of the global cotton story and that synthetic fibres, not other cotton producers, represent the greatest competition.

In October 2016, Cotton Australia and the Australian Cotton Shippers Association (ACSA) co-hosted a dinner for 60 Better Cotton Initiative (BCI) members in Shanghai, China, including six Australian brands that Cotton Australia has been working with. The BCI dinner attracted strong interest from leading cotton brands and manufacturers who received a market update from ACSA, and a sustainability update from Cotton Australia. Cotton growers Barb Grey (Mungindi) and Renee Anderson (Emerald) connected with the guests by telling their personal sustainability stories, proving a very powerful way to get the message across.

## INFLUENCING THE INFLUENCERS

The strategic direction of the Cotton to Market program has evolved to increasingly focus our efforts on influencing the influencers of the cotton supply chain – a move which is already paying dividends for the program. Working with supply chain influencers allows Cotton Australia to increase the opportunities for Australian cotton to be represented when brands and retailers seek responsibly produced fibre.

Cotton Australia joined leading international brands and retailers, cotton identity programs, industry initiatives and other stakeholders across the supply chain to progress the work of Cotton 2040. The Cotton 2040 initiative is designed to drive change in cotton supply chains by taking collaborative cross-industry action so that more sustainable cotton becomes a mainstream commodity. Cotton Australia's participation in Cotton 2040 gives Australian cotton a seat at the table. Over the coming year, Cotton Australia will continue to work with



Representatives from Jeanswest with Cotton Australia CEO Adam Kay



Manish Chawla of global fashion brand H&M speaking at the Australian Cotton Conference



Australian cotton industry representatives at the Intertextile conference in Shanghai

end-users and other cotton identity programs to find ways to increase demand for sustainable cotton globally, in all of its forms. In particular, the work of Cotton 2040 will continue to develop a framework and practical tools for brands and retailers to help them solve some of the internal barriers to uptake and more easily source sustainable cotton in their supply chain – and Australian cotton is now part of the mix.

Together with the CRDC, Cotton Australia attended the annual meeting of the Sustainable Apparel Coalition (SAC) in May 2016 to present the Australian cotton story and to bolster our understanding about where the world is heading in terms of assessing sustainability throughout the supply chain. The SAC meeting convened a group of the world's most influential brands, retailers and textile manufacturers concerned about sustainability in the supply chain. The SAC's Higg Index is gaining traction as a tool that gives a score to factories, raw materials and brands across a number of modules. For cotton this includes 'conventional cotton' and organic cotton, with plans to potentially include the Better Cotton Initiative, Cotton LEADS™, Cotton Made in Africa, and more. Representing Australian cotton as part of these discussions is vital to ensure Australian growers are recognised for their sustainability efforts.

## STRONG INTEREST IN AUSTRALIAN COTTON AT INTERTEXTILE

In October 2016, the Australian cotton story was showcased to a global audience of brands, retailers and manufacturers at Intertextile, the world's largest fabric fair held in Shanghai, China. Cotton Australia's trade display attracted keen interest from Intertextile delegates, with around 75 enquiries from brands, manufacturers, spinning mills, media and other associations interested in sourcing or finding out more about Australian cotton, BCI and the Cotton LEADS™ program.

Image right: Intertextile Shanghai

# COTTON LEADS™



Cotton Australia is a founding partner of Cotton LEADS, a program committed to responsibly produced cotton on a national scale.

棉农领袖™ (使用CL标)  
澳大利亚棉花协会是棉农领袖项目  
该项目致力于在全国范围内

# myBMP & BCI

GROWER ENGAGEMENT WITH THE INDUSTRY'S BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICE PROGRAM CONTINUES TO ACCELERATE, AS DOES TAKE-UP OF THE BETTER COTTON INITIATIVE.

- **Cotton Australia promotes myBMP as a valuable tool for growers and the industry: it improves efficiency, grants access to BCI, and protects the industry from social licence threats**
- **More and more growers are choosing to sell their myBMP-certified cotton through BCI, with many receiving a premium**
- **More than 75% of cotton farms are registered in myBMP**

Cotton Australia's work to encourage grower engagement with myBMP is accelerating, with more than 75% of cotton farms now registered in the system.



myBMP helps growers reduce on-farm risk, meet regulatory requirements, implement industry best practice, improve business management and much more.

Originally introduced in 1997 with one module, it has expanded since then to a whole farm management system:

- Sustainable Natural Landscape – Managing the vegetative and riparian assets on farm
- Soil Health – Maintaining and/or improving soil quality
- Water Management – Water quality, efficiency of storage and distribution
- Energy and Input Efficiency – Efficient energy inputs such as electricity, fuel & fertilisers
- Integrated Pest Management (IPM) – Management of

pests, weeds and diseases

- Pesticide Management – Pesticide management, storage and use on farm
- Petrochemical Storage and Handling – Managing fuels and lubricants on farm
- Biosecurity – Prevention, management and control of pests and diseases
- Fibre Quality – Growing the best quality cotton possible
- HR & WHS – Managing employees and contractors whilst providing a safe workplace

Participants are backed by personalised support and technical assistance from the myBMP team, Cotton Australia regional managers and CottonInfo regional extension officers. The past year has seen particular effort by the Cotton Australia and CottonInfo teams to work together to achieve more engagement with the program.

In the year to May 2017 the number of growers registered in myBMP grew 16%. 150 cotton farms are now myBMP-certified, an increase of 40% since June 2016.

The myBMP team completed a refresh of myBMP content in October 2016, which streamlined the program, reduced the number of checklist items, and added resources and templates to help growers meet standards and achieve certification.

The myBMP team has also worked on the ground to help growers engage with the program and improve practices. At six workshops across Queensland, 45 cotton growers and employees worked through myBMP's WHS module. The workshops covered



hazard identification, risk assessment, eliminating and controlling risks, injury management and returning to work, and were funded by WorkCover Queensland.

In the Central Highlands and Dawson-Callide Valleys, myBMP is conducting a project with a range of activities over three years, designed to improve water and nutrient use efficiency. The project is supported by the Fitzroy Basin Association (FBA), funded by the Australian Government, and delivered via the Reef Trust. The project began with workshops in Emerald and Theodore, and area-wide soil testing to compare soils and nutrients in the best and worst cotton fields.

Cotton Australia, the CRDC and CottonInfo will continue to support the important myBMP program and its efforts to engage growers.

## GRANTS PROGRAM REWARDS RESPONSIBLE, SUSTAINABLE COTTON PRODUCTION

Cotton growers achieving myBMP certification in 2017 will again be eligible for a \$2,000 (ex GST) grant under the Better Farming Brighter Future sustainable cotton farming initiative.

It is the fourth consecutive season Monsanto Australia has offered the grants to help encourage growers to undertake myBMP certification.

Supported by Cotton Australia and the Cotton Research and Development Corporation (CRDC), the Better Farming Brighter Future grants are available to all cotton farmers who undertake an audit and successfully complete myBMP certification of their operation during the 2017 calendar year. Growers must successfully

complete their myBMP certification prior to December 31, 2017 to be eligible to receive a grant.

In 2016-17, 14 growers received Monsanto grants of up to \$2000 to cover audit costs for 42 farms that successfully attained myBMP accreditation.

Cotton Australia encourages all cotton growers considering myBMP accreditation to take up the grant.

For more information, visit [www.monsanto.com/global/au/products/pages/better-farming-brighter-future.aspx](http://www.monsanto.com/global/au/products/pages/better-farming-brighter-future.aspx)



BCI is an international not-for-profit organisation dedicated to prompting the responsible, sustainable production of cotton around the world.

Cotton Australia manages the ongoing relationship with BCI on behalf of the industry. To date, feedback from growers engaged with BCI has been overwhelmingly positive, with some achieving healthy premiums for cotton sold into the system.

In the 2016-17 season, a total of 76 farms opted in to the BCI system, a record number for Australia's cotton industry. The area of BCI cotton under production was 66,000 ha, more than twice that of the previous season and representing more than 15% of Australia's total cotton production.

Demand for Better Cotton is also increasing – more than 90% of the BCI credits were sold by growers for the 2015-16 crop compared to 53% for the previous year.

Cotton Australia has renewed the BCI partnership agreement for another three years, until December 2019.

# ESSENTIAL SERVICES FOR GROWERS

- **Matched growers with harvest contractors, helping them prepare for busy harvest period**
- **Critical safety resources supplied to growers and farm staff**
- **Growers and farm workers encouraged to ‘Look up and Live’**

Every year, Cotton Australia plays a crucial role in delivering beneficial services and resources to growers, ensuring their operations remain safe, compliant, profitable and efficient throughout the year.

## TRANSPORT

Every year, Cotton Australia liaises with federal and state regulatory authorities to overcome transport issues, particularly regarding the movement of heavy machinery at critical periods during the season.

In the past season, Cotton Australia was able to secure permanent permission in Queensland for the transport of cotton modules up to 4.6m high, hauled in what is commonly referred to as ‘Collier-Miller’ systems.

In NSW, Cotton Australia secured permission for the cartage of cotton on extended road trains across the state, where previously permission existed only in Queensland.

## COTTONSAFE: PRACTICAL WORKPLACE HEALTH AND SAFETY (WHS) RESOURCES

Safety is an important component of every farming operation. To help growers keep everyone safe on farm – from families, staff and contractors to visitors – Cotton Australia delivered its annual CottonSafe campaign.

Safety resources and templates engage with workers and contractors to help them identify and assess hazards on farms, and to develop and implement plans and procedures to minimise risks.

Cotton Australia’s resources are linked to the industry’s myBMP program, specifically its modules on human

resources and WHS, pesticide management and petrochemical storage and handling. These modules provide growers with practical safety tools to implement best practice on farm.

## PICK N MATCH: SECURING A CONTRACTOR

Cotton Australia’s annual Pick N Match campaign allows growers to easily secure picking and transport contractors – an important facility, especially in seasons where expanded dryland cropping places pressure on picking resources.

The Pick N Match service helps bring growers and picking contractors together, making harvest more efficient. Each year, at the beginning of the season, Cotton Australia reaches out to contractors to determine their availability, areas of operation and machinery types, and makes this information available to growers.

## FARM HYGIENE

The Come Clean – Go Clean program helps enable higher yields by preventing the spread of pests and diseases between fields, farms and regions. The campaign distributes information about the major principles of Come Clean – Go Clean, which include:

- inspecting machinery including pickers, boll buggies, module builders, mulchers, laser buckets, cultivators, chain beds and headers for contamination, and
- clearly communicating the need for farm hygiene to staff, contractors and others.

## LOOK UP AND LIVE

In the past year, Cotton Australia again liaised with energy companies in Queensland and NSW to help deliver critical ‘look up and live’ safety resources.

The campaign urges cotton growers, farm staff, contractors and visitors operating near overhead powerlines, particularly during the busy harvest period, to consider their safety. Resources provided to growers include fact sheets, posters, brochures and videos.

# RESEARCH DIRECTION & STEWARDSHIP

- **Maintaining grower-led research priorities**
- **Working to preserve matching government R&D funding contributions**
- **Facilitating the TIMS Committee and its important work on resistance management**

## RESEARCH PRIORITIES

For the 2017-18 research funding round, the CRDC Board approved \$22 million in research investment for 200 projects.

Cotton Australia continued its efforts ahead of the 2018-19 round to ensure grower priorities are reflected in the CRDC's research investments, under each of the five research and direction themes: farmers, industry, customers, people and performance.

Cotton Australia's team of regional managers worked with each cotton grower association (CGA) to facilitate workshops to gather grower research priority feedback. Cotton Australia and its member representatives, plus the TIMS Committee, also participated in the crop protection and workforce management workshops to examine the key risks, gaps and priorities for the industry ahead of the CRDC's May 2017 Annual R&D Forum.

## BIOSECURITY EFFORTS

On behalf of industry, Cotton Australia participated in a number of meetings to review the national framework for biosecurity incursion preparedness and responsiveness. These efforts are critical to ensure our industry remains protected from risks and that the framework is responsive and flexible.

This season, Cotton Australia worked with state and Federal governments and other at-risk industries to implement an eradication plan for Khapra beetle.

Cotton Australia's Biosecurity Reference Group identified the risk to our industry and provided technical advice to ensure the industry is prepared for future incursions.

The organisation's work in the space and collaboration with state and federal government biosecurity agencies

has been ramped up in the context of changing biosecurity regulations and national harmonisation. Our work in conjunction with CottonInfo and CRDC will continue to ensure growers and industry are prepared for the changes.

## TIMS COMMITTEE

The Cotton Australia-facilitated Transgenic and Insect Management Strategies (TIMS) Committee continued its work to develop, review and oversee the Australian cotton industry's Insecticide, Herbicide and Bt Resistance Management Strategies. In the last season, the major work of the TIMS Committee focused on:

- Monitoring insecticide resistance, responding to emerging issues and placing new products in the Insecticide Resistance Management Strategy to manage potential resistance issues
- Identifying R&D needs and refining the Bollgard 3 Resistance Management Plan
- Developing a new industry-led stewardship framework to regulate herbicides and address emerging resistance issues
- Assuring availability of pesticides, fungicides and herbicides where growers are limited by treatment options



Growers at the May 2017 General Meeting discussing stewardship issues with Cotton Australia Policy Officer for Research Direction & Stewardship, Dr Nicola Cottee.

# SPRAY DRIFT

## TACKLING OFF-TARGET SPRAY DRIFT

### CHALLENGES FOR THE COMING YEAR

- Work with all participants in the chemical value chain to promote responsible use and investment in risk mitigation initiatives
- Continue to review and update Cotton Australia's spray drift prevention efforts to ensure grower priorities are represented

- **Multi-faceted campaign rolled-out to help tackle off-target spray drift in all cotton growing valleys**
- **Cotton Australia boosted efforts to collaborate with other agricultural industries, supply chain participants and regulators**

Incidents of off-target damage were reported to have affected cotton in every valley this season, following widespread rainfall events in December 2016 and January 2017. It is estimated that 7.7% of the national cotton crop was damaged this season, down from 20% of the crop damaged last season.

Each season, Cotton Australia runs a campaign to help protect Australia's cotton crops from the effects of spray drift that includes educating users of Group I herbicides such as 2,4-D. The campaign includes activities in regulation, awareness, education, research, reporting, and compliance.

Additionally, Cotton Australia boosted its efforts to work with other agricultural industries and state regulatory authorities, particularly in promoting best spray practice across all industries and all chemical users.

This season's campaign incorporated feedback obtained from cotton grower associations (CGA) through research prioritisation workshops and an online survey.

Cotton Australia also incorporated feedback from crop consultants through the Crop Consultants Association. The campaign was multi-faceted, and key components included:

- **High percentage of growers engaged with CottonMap**
  - Again this season, Cotton Australia led the promotion of CottonMap and supported users with mapping fields. The site was accessed more than 23,000 times over the season
  - The 2016/17 season launch date for CottonMap was brought forward from September to August, to account for an earlier Bollgard 3 planting date in Central Queensland
- **Media campaign**
  - Scheduled press releases were distributed at multiple points throughout the season (planting, reminders, and updates) in every cotton production area. Cotton Australia spokespeople responded to media interview requests to increase awareness
  - Responsive press releases were distributed following weather events/damage in specific areas. This season, Cotton Australia worked closely with GrainGrowers to issue joint releases in most valleys



- **Radio ads**

- Cotton Australia ran more than 1200 radio ads targeting all farmers in cotton production areas, warning of spray drift risks once cotton is planted and providing best practice tips, specifically targeting night spraying

- **myBMP**

- The myBMP (Best Management Practices) Pesticide Management module provided guidance to growers on the storage, handling and correct application of pesticides to reduce any potential negative impacts to growers, cotton businesses, neighbouring farmers and the environment
- Cotton Australia's Regional Managers continued to provide assistance to growers undertaking myBMP

- **Research and development**

- Cotton Australia's Grower Advisory Panels supported spray drift projects as part of the CRDC's investment portfolio
- Research supported by the Growers Advisory Panels commenced in mid-2016 to identify and model inversion events to develop an inversion alert tool for growers

- **Workshops**

- Training for spray applicators and consultants was considered one of the highest priorities for Cotton Australia investment by growers and consultants through the online spray drift survey (March 2016). In response to this overwhelming feedback, Cotton Australia has supported or promoted spray application workshops in most of the cotton growing regions throughout the 2016-17 season. Attendance and demand for workshops remains high

- **Extension tools**

- Again this season, Cotton Australia supported the promotion of a guide developed by Mary O'Brien Rural Enterprises Pty Ltd to increase awareness amongst farmers and spray applicators about surface temperature inversions. To date, the guide is supported and has been shared by GrainGrowers and Pulse Australia

- CropLife's agchem stewardship platform, technical documents and other resources on our website

- **Resellers and agronomists**

- Cotton Australia's Regional Managers visited more than 100 resellers and chemical distributors to provide point-of-sale posters and spray drift reminders
- Cotton Australia also met with agronomists, contractors and applicators to drive best practice

- **Briefing regulators**

- Cotton Australia liaised with state regulators Biosecurity Queensland and the NSW Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) on communications/media activities, audits and investigations
- Cotton Australia remains in contact with the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) on Group I related spray impacts on cotton

- **Raising awareness with other organisations**

- Cotton Australia collaborated with other industries to prevent spray drift occurrences and raise awareness of best practice. Cotton Australia also works closely with the Aerial Applicators Association of Australia (AAAA)

# TELECOMS

## SEEKING IMPROVED SERVICES FOR GROWERS AND COTTON ENTERPRISES

### CHALLENGES FOR THE COMING YEAR

- Ensuring the outcomes of the numerous telecommunications reviews and inquiries currently underway will create comprehensive and aligned policy outcomes for regional users, rather than continuing the current 'patchwork' policy trend in Australian telecommunications
- Ensuring nbn services, in particular Sky Muster, are updated to reflect the needs of high-tech cotton growing businesses. The current data limits do not meet the needs of businesses and Cotton Australia will continue its work to have this recognised and rectified by nbn

- **Cotton Australia ramps up efforts to secure improved broadband services for cotton growers**
- **Cotton Australia joins Australian Communications Consumer Action Network (ACCAN) and is a founding member of the Regional, Rural and Remote Communications Coalition (RRRCC) to unite with allied agricultural, rural Australian, education and health organisations**

In response to concerns raised at Cotton Australia's May 2016 General Meeting, the organisation's policy team has worked hard to address the telecommunications issues faced by growers and cotton enterprises in rural and regional areas.

In November 2016, Cotton Australia became a founding member of the Regional, Rural and Remote Communications Coalition (RRRCC), which seeks to end the data drought and champion better communications services for consumers and small businesses living in regional, rural and remote areas. The Coalition has 20 members, including the Australian Communications Consumer Action Network (ACCAN) and the National Farmers' Federation (NFF), both of which Cotton

Australia is a member of.

As part of the RRRCC, Cotton Australia is calling for:

- A universal service obligation that is technologically neutral and provides access to both voice and data
- Updated customer service guarantees and reliability measures to underpin the provision of voice and data services, to deliver more accountability from providers and the nbn
- Long term public funding for open access mobile network expansion in rural and regional Australia
- Fair and equitable access to Sky Muster for those with a genuine need for the service, and access which reflects the residential, educational and business needs of rural and regional Australia
- Fully resourced capacity building programs that build digital ability, and the development of effective problem solving support for regional, rural and remote businesses and consumers
- The development of effective problem-solving support for regional, rural and remote businesses and consumers, and fully resourced capacity building programs that build digital ability



These calls were echoed by Cotton Australia in Parliament House, Canberra, in March 2017. A representative of Cotton Australia's policy team joined members of the RRRCC to meet with 50 parliamentarians over two days. In seeking solutions to improve the current telecommunications environment, Cotton Australia highlighted the inequity and missed opportunities created by inadequate mobile phone network coverage and unreliable and limited internet connectivity in cotton growing regions.

Cotton Australia has also briefed a number of telecommunications companies, including Telstra, on the needs of cotton businesses now and into the future. In February 2017, Cotton Australia hosted a senior Telstra executive in Northern NSW for a number of days, demonstrating first-hand the gap between available technologies and available telecommunications infrastructure.

The 18th Australian Cotton Conference was the biggest ever, celebrating excellence via the Cotton Industry Awards and launching an important photography competition.

# AUSTRALIAN COTTON CONFERENCE

A RECORD-BREAKING EVENT

- **More than 1900 delegates: a new record**
- **International keynote speakers a huge drawcard**
- **Australian Cotton Industry Awards celebrates grower achievements**

The industry gathered on the Gold Coast in early August 2017 for the 18th Australian Cotton Conference, an event attended by more than 1900 delegates – a new record in the event's 36 years in operation.

The record number of attendees speaks about our industry's resilience, our culture of sharing knowledge and our place in the agricultural community.

The Conference was run in collaboration with the Australian Cotton Shippers Association (ACSA), and concluded with the Australian Cotton Industry Awards gala dinner.

This event delivered a packed program – attendees heard about advancements in digital agriculture; farm business succession planning; research & development news; Cotton Australia's international promotion program and the Better Cotton Initiative; plus sessions on water use, precision technologies and much more.

Keynote speakers included senior executives from global retail brands such as Susi Proudman (Nike) and Manish Chawla (H&M), who gave their insights into what drives brands and retailers towards sustainability. David Thodey, head of the CSIRO, discussed important issues around science research. And brothers Peter and Andrew Greste spoke about resilience, teamwork and courage.

The event attracted growers, ginnerers and others in the industry from as far north as Emerald in Queensland, and from as far south as Swan Hall in Victoria, connecting everyone in the supply chain.

To finalise the Conference, more than 1000 people gathered to celebrate the recipients of the 2016 Australian Cotton Industry Awards. The Awards program recognises excellence and achievement in Australia's cotton industry throughout the supply chain, from growers and ginnerers to product suppliers, consultants, agronomists and researchers.

Every year the Australian Cotton Industry Awards celebrate not just the great work and personal commitment of the recipients and finalists, but also the commitment of everyone throughout the cotton supply chain.

The 2016 Australian Cotton Industry Awards recipients were:

- **Monsanto Grower of the Year:** Connamara Partnership – Ian, Marilyn and Harry Carter ("Connamara", Pine Ridge, NSW)
- **AgriRisk High Achiever of the Year:** Commins Partnership – Tim and Roger Commins ("Tiralee", Whitton, NSW)
- **Chris Lehmann Trust Young Achiever of the Year, sponsored by Bayer CropScience:** Rebecca Fing (Goondiwindi, Qld)
- **Cotton Seed Distributors Researcher of the Year:** Dr Guy Roth (Roth Rural, Narrabri, NSW)
- **IPF Service to Industry Award:** John Marshall (Toowoomba, Qld)



Recipients and sponsors of the 2016 Australian Cotton Industry Awards.

## FACES OF AUSTRALIAN COTTON

The 2016 Australian Cotton Conference was the launching pad for a great cotton community initiative, the Faces Of Australian Cotton competition, run by Cotton Australia in the lead-up to the event.

More than 600 entries were submitted for the competition's four categories, vying for a total of six prizes.

Entries were judged by professional rural Australian photographer Joshua Smith (Joshua J Smith Photography).

Southern Queensland freelance journalist, writer and photographer Andrea Crothers took out the overall first place prize in the competition.

The entries captured the best of the modern Australian cotton industry, and provided a visually spectacular backdrop to the Conference.

Recipients for the Faces of Australian Cotton Competition were:

- Overall first place winner: Andrea Crothers, Dirranbandi Queensland
- Runner-up: Gayle Mills, Gunnedah NSW
- Category 1: Aussie cotton growers and industry personnel – capturing the character of the industry: Andrea Crothers, Dirranbandi Queensland
- Category 2: Aussie cotton families – people on the land: Gayle Mills, Gunnedah NSW
- Category 3: Innovation in cotton – people demonstrating the latest technologies and equipment: Heike Watson, Boggabri NSW
- People's choice award: Eve Jeffery, The Channon NSW

Advocacy has improved the lot of cotton growers affected by resources operations, but the industry must remain vigilant and continue working to strengthen landholder rights.

# MINING & CSG

## LANDHOLDER PROTECTIONS STRENGTHENED, BUT THE WORK CONTINUES

### CHALLENGES FOR THE COMING YEAR

- Continue to monitor resources operations in cotton-growing districts in order to protect landholders' property rights
- Work with a taskforce of agriculture groups – including NSW CWA, NSW Farmers and NSW Irrigators Council to ensure the imbalance between resources companies and landholders are addressed
- Stay abreast of changes to legislation and regulation to maintain the land and water property rights of our growers
- Work with NFF to ensure that Federal funding of the Bioregional Assessment Program and harmonisation of land access regulation achieves research and policy outcomes that are in the best interest of growers

- **Queensland farmers see landholder protections and representation strengthened**
- **Compensation caps for NSW growers a disappointing setback**

Cotton Australia's activity in the mining and coal seam gas (CSG) sector has been constant over the past year, for both NSW and Queensland.

While the environment for growers in NSW remains tenuous, it was a year of success for landholders in Queensland.

### NSW

The past year has seen mixed results for growers affected by resources operations in NSW.

Significant congratulations go to the landholder groups on the NSW Liverpool Plains for their advocacy win, after the NSW Government announced it would buy back BHP's licence for the Caroon Coal Mine in August 2016. The exploration licence had been issued in 2006 for approximately 344 sq km on prime agricultural land.

It was a decade-long fight to protect landholder rights, and Cotton Australia was proud to support the local landholder groups. We have asked the NSW Government to consider applying the same methodology on other mining and CSG projects affecting agriculture. Cotton Australia will support local advocacy efforts around the Narrabri Gas Project, Watermark, Arrow's Tipton Expansion and Vickery Extension projects in the coming year.

However, the news was not all positive for farmers affected by resources operations in NSW. The State Government has updated the statutory compensation caps for landholders, which are borne by gas exploration companies.

Exempt activities are capped at \$1500, and assessable activities at \$2500. In the event that issues require mediation or arbitration, the new regulation states 'reasonable costs' are to be covered by the gas company.

Cotton Australia had campaigned hard to convince the NSW Government to introduce adequate caps for landholders negotiating with resources companies, and was extremely disappointed to see the Government



establish such low caps, which will see landholders continue to bear the cost of land access negotiations except where discussions escalate to mediation.

We have advised the NSW Government that the caps are clearly inadequate to meet the requirements of provision of legal advice, technical advice and landholder time, and will continue pressing the Minister for Resources, Energy and Utilities to introduce satisfactory caps for landholders, and take in to account expert advice on the true costs borne by landholders.

## QUEENSLAND

Following several years of setbacks on resources issues in the state, Queensland growers have posted several wins in the past 12 months.

In June 2016 we welcomed the Queensland Government's commitment to \$7 million in funding for the Coal Seam Gas Compliance Unit (CSGCU), over two years.

The announcement came after Cotton Australia's submission to the Review of the GasFields Commission, in which we stressed the importance of continuing to monitor and regulate gas developments. We also pointed out that, without the CSGCU, there would be few checks and balances between the operations of the CSG industry and farmers, and the state's strict environmental and health & safety standards might suffer.

That positive outcome was followed up in December 2016 with the Queensland Government's announcement of a shake-up to agencies that support landholders negotiating land access and resolution of disputes between landholders and resources companies.

Several elements to the new regime work to the benefit of growers. Firstly, the Gasfields Commission has been refreshed, with the appointment of former Queensland Farmers' Federation CEO Ruth Wade to the

role of Chair. In addition, Theodore cotton grower (and Cotton Australia Board member), Fleur Anderson, was appointed as a commissioner. Current commissioners Ian Hayllor and Rick Wilkinson were also reappointed.

The Gasfields Commission is now well-served by commissioners with considerable and appropriate experience of the issues. Both Fleur Anderson and Ian Hayllor are cotton growers whose experience with intensive irrigated farming has meant significant engagement with resources companies over land access issues. Furthermore, Ms Anderson has also held roles herself with resources companies previously.

Secondly, the Government announced it would appoint an Ombudsman – a new role for this regulatory environment – whose role will focus on resolving disputes between landholders and resource companies.

Both of these actions are a step towards rectifying the imbalance between landholders and resource companies when it comes to the negotiation of land access agreements, and resolving disputes in the state, and were welcomed by Cotton Australia.

# EDUCATION

PROMOTING OUR INDUSTRY'S GREAT STORY, SECURING CAPACITY

- **Cotton Classroom reach grows to 183,000, up almost 20% on the previous period**
- **Direct reach to students grows by 44% through more than 85 face-to-face workshops, events, competitions and online education resources**
- **Scholarship programs helps secure the industry's capacity now and into the future**

## REACH OF EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INCREASES

More than 15,000 unique visitors access Cotton Australia's online Cotton Classroom each month, representing a significant increase on the previous period, and testament to the organisation's efforts to share our industry's great story with students and teachers.

Cotton Australia's network of regional managers also work directly with primary and secondary schools and communities in their valley, organising farm tours for students and teachers, attending school events, supporting teachers with education resources, and participating in careers events.

Cotton Australia continues to work closely with organisations such as the Primary Industries Education Foundation Australia (PIEFA) to produce new resources and enhance the reach of our educational materials. Four new units of work for years 7-10 – covering science, geography and mathematics – have been published by PIEFA in close collaboration with Cotton Australia. These resources were accessed more than 7000 times in early 2017 alone.

## VIRTUAL CLASSROOMS

In 2016, Cotton Australia's virtual classroom initiative connected 16 schools, 19 classes and 487 students from across Australia to cotton growers. Three virtual classroom lessons were hosted. Importantly, 90% of teachers reported a high level of satisfaction with the sessions and indicated they will either use them again or recommend them to a colleague. In 2017, Cotton Australia has plans to run 8 more virtual classroom lessons.

## INCREASED PRESENCE AT KEY EDUCATION EVENTS

Cotton Australia amplified its representation at key teacher events, including the NSW Department of Education STEM Action School Forum and 'Education Symposium 2016: Future Reform Directions for NSW', the PIEFA Conference, the NSW Association of Agricultural Teachers Sydney Branch meeting and the Home Economics Institute of Australia Conference. Cotton Australia also sponsored the NSW Association of Agricultural Teacher's Conference and the Queensland Agricultural Educators Conference.

## ARCHIBULL PRIZE

Cotton Australia's sponsorship of the 2016 Archibull Prize, run by Art4Agriculture, enabled 16 schools (5 in Queensland and 11 in NSW) to undertake an in-depth study of the cotton industry. To enhance learning, students were directly connected to a cotton Young Farming Champion. The ArchiBull experience is still having a great impact on knowledge and attitudes – for



example, the percentage of students knowing what it takes to make their clothing grew from 61% to 81% and student preferences to wear clothes made of natural fibre grew from 46% to 65%.

## SCHOLARSHIPS HELP BUILD CAPACITY

In 2016, Cotton Australia sponsored 23 undergraduate university students studying agriculture-related courses. The scholarships were enabled by the Cotton Catchments Communities Co-operative Research Centre's Legacy Fund. The scholarships sponsored attendance at the 2016 Australian Cotton Conference, supported two students undertaking a final year project relating to the cotton industry and jointly supported two students to attend Emerald Agricultural College with the Central Highlands Cotton Growers' and Irrigators' Association (CHCGIA).

## ENGAGING WITH UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

More than 400 students have been engaged in information about 'cotton careers' through Cotton Australia's participation at key university events, including the UQ Gatton Regional Careers Fair, UQ Gatton Agribusiness student supply chain tour, CSU Agriculture and Animal Industry Careers Fair, Sydney University Agriculture Society networking evening, and the Griffith University Urban & Environmental Planning students farm visit. These interactions are used to build Cotton Australia's database to connect job seekers – via Cotton Australia's network of regional managers – with on-farm and industry job opportunities.

# COMMUNICATIONS

ELEVATING IMPORTANT ISSUES ON BEHALF OF GROWERS, SHARING OUR INDUSTRY'S STORY

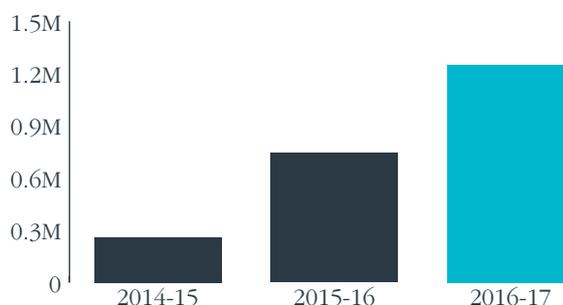
- **More than 1000 media hits tracked in the past 12 months**
- **Cotton Australia's website engagement grows to 615,000 page views in the past year**
- **The organisation's social media engagement continues to increase**

In the past 12 months, Cotton Australia's communications activities attracted more than 1000 stories in the media, the majority of which present positive messages about our industry and highlight key issues important to growers. The organisation's leaders are regularly profiled in the media, both in the city and the country, bringing a great level of attention to our industry. In each of the cotton growing valleys, Cotton Australia's regional managers continue to represent our industry in local media networks.

Cotton Australia's website engagement experienced growth, attracting 615,000 page views in the past 12 months (up more than 8%) from more than 235,000 unique users.

Year on year, Cotton Australia's social media engagement also grew. Through platforms including Facebook, Twitter, Google+, LinkedIn and YouTube, Cotton Australia continues to connect our cotton communities with important issues and opportunities, reach new audiences, and connect with influencers and the media, and support partner organisations. More than 9600 people follow Cotton Australia across our various social media platforms, up more than 33% on the previous period. Cotton Australia's posts and 'tweets' reached more than 1.249 million people, representing a 68% increase on the previous period. Additionally, more than 63,000 have viewed Cotton Australia's YouTube videos designed for the general public, students and educators and end-users.

**Social media growth over the past three operating years: message views**



Cotton Australia continues to connect directly with growers and others in our industry via the organisation's fortnightly editions of Cotton Matters, other e-news bulletins and monthly editions of myBMP Matters. These materials are widely read.

Alongside our allies, Cotton Australia worked hard to elevate the #MoreThanFlow campaign into the spotlight for traditional media, the community and through the organisation's social media channels. The campaign demonstrated the value of a single message coming from a collective of groups, which in this case included – AgForce, Barwon-Darling Water, BRFF, GVIA, MRFF, Namoi Water, NFF, NIC, NSWIC, QFF, Smartrivers and Cotton Australia. The 28 #MoreThanFlow videos produced by Cotton Australia – featuring interviews of growers, influencers, politicians and community members from all corners of the Northern Basin – attracted more than 60,000 views on Facebook and YouTube alone in the space of four months.



# VALLEYS REPORT

## CENTRAL HIGHLANDS

**Regional Manager: Renee Anderson**  
**Hectares grown in 2016-17: 19,943**  
**Bales produced in 2016-17: 182,570 (forecast)**



### Cotton Australia highlights:

- Ensured the voice of growers was heard on the important subject of research priorities, particularly for issues such as management of late crops, insect pressure and resistance management
- Assisted growers impacted by flooding, monitoring reports and guiding farmers to assistance programs
- Helped advance water policy in the region by participating in Local Management Arrangement meetings to ensure grower interests were represented
- Attended the Intertextile international trade fair in Shanghai to advance the organisation's Cotton To Market promotion program and the Better Cotton Initiative. The event was very successful, forging important links to suppliers in crucial foreign markets
- Promoted the industry to students and educators through events such as Teach The Teacher and 'Virtual Classroom' sessions, which deliver valuable information while increasing the reputation of our industry
- Helped promote harvest efficiency by meeting with local transport regulatory authorities and updating growers on the latest movement restrictions

*Image: Cotton Australia Central Highlands Regional Manager, Renee Anderson.*

## DAWSON VALLEY

**Regional Manager: Bronwyn Christensen**  
**Hectares grown in 2016-17: 4456**  
**Bales produced in 2016-17: 46,411 (forecast)**



### Cotton Australia highlights:

- Worked to protect landholders by participating in an FBA-funded Water Quality Improvement Project. Soil testing will provide a baseline for the district, which will provide crucial data to compare against well into the future
- Helped advance the organisation's research agenda by participating in the CRDC Board visit to the valley. Growers appreciated the opportunity to discuss research priorities directly with Board members
- Responding to the increased threat of nematodes, worked with growers and QDAF to identify pest hot spots and help growers respond with appropriate measures
- Assisted in securing Grass Roots Grants for local weather monitoring stations, which will deliver an important boost to local water and spray drift management for growers
- Organised dryland cotton workshops, which help engage new and returning growers and assist them in farming cotton efficiently and profitably
- Promoted the industry to students and educators by organising school tours to cotton farms and the Queensland Cotton gin at Moura
- Assisted growers in developing research & policy priorities for CRDC, ensuring local growers had a voice in the process

*Image: Cotton Australia Dawson Valley Regional Manager Bron Christensen (second from right) with farm staff.*

## DARLING DOWNS

**Regional Manager: Mary O'Brien**  
**Hectares grown in 2016-17: 67,786**  
**Bales produced in 2016-17: 406,128 (forecast)**



### Cotton Australia highlights:

- Helped lead the industry's crucial response to persistent spray drift issues, guiding policy, providing technical expertise and working to inform growers and spray contractors at workshops and meetings. In addition, participated in an important video series demonstrating how surface temperature inversions are formed and their risk to spray operations
- Improved harvest efficiency and compliance by organising transport forums for growers and contractors. The events were very well attended. In addition, met with local council representatives to ensure round module pickers could move safely during harvest, and organised an on-farm tour for the NHVR, to assist in the harmonisation of transport regulations between jurisdictions
- Assisted new growers enter the industry by visiting farmers in the South Burnett region, informing them of opportunities and providing advice
- Provided important services for growers, including workshops for energy efficiency, first aid and chemical user accreditation
- Helped secure the industry's future workforce by organising a visit from Griffith University students, a great opportunity to sell a career in cotton

*Image: Cotton Australia Darling Downs Regional Manager Mary O'Brien with grower Chris Barry.*

## ST GEORGE & DIRRANBANDI

**Regional Manager: Jane Hill**  
**Hectares grown in 2016-17: 33,455**  
**Bales produced in 2016-17: 373,496 (forecast)**



### Cotton Australia highlights:

- Represented local growers at Murray Darling Basin Authority meetings held to discuss its Northern Basin Review, an important addition to the organisation's water policy initiatives
- Ensured the voice of growers was heard on important research priorities by organising workshops, at which growers gave feedback on research direction
- Promoted the industry to educators and students by organising a school tour from Dirranbandi through their local gin
- Helped rally the cotton community by participating in organising committees for events including the St George Cotton Awards Dinner and the Cotton Womens' Picnic
- Promoted grower and farm worker safety by organising WHS and first aid workshops in the region
- In a year of intense spray drift pressure, helped to protect farms by organising or participating in Chem Cert and Nufarm spraywise workshops
- Participated in the Women In Cotton picnic, a valuable opportunity to discuss Cotton Australia's important initiatives and get valuable feedback from growers
- Organised a pre-harvest transport forum, which was well attended by growers

*Image: Cotton Australia St George & Dirranbandi Regional Manager Jane Hill (In June 2016 Jane Hill also took on duties as Regional Manager for Mungindi).*

## BORDER RIVERS

**Regional Manager: Rebecca Fing**

### MACINTYRE

**Hectares grown in 2016-17: 52,433**

**Bales produced in 2016-17: 496,660 (forecast)**

### MUNGINDI

**Hectares grown in 2016-17: 10,699**

**Bales produced in 2016-17: 99,630 (forecast)**



#### Cotton Australia highlights:

- Worked persistently to advance the industry's workforce programs, resulting in the successful achievement of more than \$14 million for training programs over four years. The Ag Skilled program will significantly boost the training available to growers and farm staff. In addition, conducted Gap Year training for young new entrants to the cotton industry, helping to secure the industry's workforce pipeline into the future
- Organised transport forums to increase harvest efficiency and promote farm worker and road safety
- Helped growers improve on-farm operations by organising energy and pumping efficiency workshops, which were well attended by growers
- Organised spray workshops to combat the threat of off-target chemical drift
- Helped organise the Cotton Ladies Day at North Star, which attracted 14 myBMP registrations and delivered important technical information
- Worked with other industry organisations to assist dryland growers and other new entrants into the industry
- Promoted excellence in the industry by assisting with the 2016 Grower of the Year field day, Cotton Awards dinner and Cotton Charity Golf Day

*Image: Cotton Australia Macintyre Valley Regional Manager Rebecca Fing with grower Andrew Newell. (In June 2016 Rebecca Fing became Cotton Australia's Workforce & Training Coordinator. Cate Wild assumed responsibility as Regional Manager for the Macintyre Valley).*

## GWYDIR

**Regional Manager: Paul Sloman**

**Hectares grown in 2016-17: 69,516**

**Bales produced in 2016-17: 684,268 (forecast)**



#### Cotton Australia highlights:

- Worked to combat the threat of off-target spray drift in a particularly troubling season by organising workshops for growers and contractors. The events were very well attended. In addition, coordinated the industry's response via CottonMap, the central hub for spray drift information
- Improved on-farm safety for growers and workers by organising and running a first aid course. The course was well attended and helped improve and update the skills of farm staff, as well as assisting growers achieve WHS compliance
- Helped improve harmony between cotton growers and beekeepers through efforts to educate and inform growers from both industries. Spoke at Spraywise events at both Bellata and Moree about the risks to bees from off-target spray drift, as well as techniques both cotton growers, spray contractors and beekeepers could employ to reduce risks
- Hosted a visit by the Plant Health Australia Board to Moree farms to understand how the cotton industry responds to, and manages, risks from biosecurity incursions. Events such as these help bolster biosecurity protection for local growers and the entire industry

*Image: Cotton Australia Gwydir Regional Manager Paul Sloman with grower Mark Winter.*

## NAMOI

**Regional Manager: Paul Sloman**  
**Hectares grown in 2016-17: 94,524**  
**Bales produced in 2016-17: 735,661 (forecast)**



### Cotton Australia highlights:

- Helped the industry celebrate excellence organising and/or assisting in the national Grower Of The Year (GOTY) Field Day and the Upper Namoi CGA Awards. The GOTY Field Day was a huge success, attracting more than 200 attendees, and Deputy PM Barnaby Joyce and NFF CEO Tony Mahar as guest speakers
- Worked to overcome the threat of spray drift through several initiatives, including attending a meeting of ACRI and surrounding farmers, which was held following a particularly severe spray drift incident. In addition, helped organise spray drift workshops
- Participated in the Quirindi Show, an important opportunity to promote the industry to the local community and engage existing growers and potential new entrants to the industry
- Improved harvest efficiency and safety by organising local transport forums, which were well attended by growers and contractors. Regulatory authorities and police gave presentations on important safety and enforcement issues
- In conjunction with Cotton Australia's policy team, held meetings between Santos and growers concerned about resources operations. Cotton Australia works tirelessly on behalf of landholders to protect valuable land and water resources from negative consequences of mining & CSG operations
- Joined Cotton Australia's policy team in a meeting with the Boggabri Farming & Community Group in response to Whitehaven Coal's proposed Vickery mine expansion project. Cotton Australia is active in the resources space in order to protect landholder rights

*Image: Cotton Australia Namoi Regional Manager Paul Sloman with Narrabri growers Matt & Fiona Norrie.*

## WALGETT & BOURKE

**Regional Manager: Paul Sloman**  
**Hectares grown in 2016-17 (aggregated): 27,634**  
**Bales produced in 2016-17 (aggregated): 277,638**



### Cotton Australia highlights:

- Participated in a dryland cotton meeting at Coonamble. The meeting was important in determining the issues existing dryland growers in the area faced, as well as providing an introduction to new growers considering entering the industry. Participants provided valuable feedback, particularly important given the rising number of dryland cotton growers in recent seasons
- Worked to prevent damage from off-target spray drift in a particularly troubling season, by organising events at which growers and contractors could learn about the risks and the latest techniques to overcome them. The events were well attended
- Delivered a presentation on the modern Australian cotton industry to students and teachers at Lightning Ridge State School. Cotton Australia's activities in the education space are extremely valuable, positively influencing the perception of our industry in communities while also strengthening the workforce into the future
- In an effort to improve harmony between the cotton and beekeeping industries, spoke about the risks to bees from off-target spraying at the CSD end-of-season meeting

*Image: Cotton Australia Regional Manager for Walgett and Bourke, Paul Sloman.*

## MACQUARIE

**Regional Manager: Julie Wise**  
**Hectares grown in 2016-17: 33,888**  
**Bales produced in 2016-17: 299,442 (forecast)**



### Cotton Australia highlights:

- Organised and attended important research meetings to ensure the voice of local growers was represented in important discussions about research priorities
- Helped protect grower interests from resources operations by participating in local meetings regarding the APPA / Pilliga gas line, a valuable addition to the organisation's mining & CSG policy efforts
- Promoted best practice in the industry by assisting in the organisation of valley field days
- Organised first aid courses for growers and farm staff, an important service to the industry
- Celebrated excellence in the industry by acting as master of ceremonies for the valley's local Cotton Awards dinner
- Assisted first-time and returning growers transition to cotton, an important role that helps maintain the strength and cohesion of our industry

*Image: Cotton Australia Macquarie Regional Manager Julie Wise (left) with Cotton Australia Policy Officer Felicity Muller and grower Andrew Gill.*

## RIVERINA & SOUTHERN VALLEYS

**Regional Manager: Honi Anderson**  
**Hectares grown in 2016-17: 58,214**  
**Bales produced in 2016-17: 567,596 (forecast)**



### Cotton Australia highlights:

- Helped improve harvest efficiency by organising transport meetings involving regulatory authorities and police. Attendance was high, contributing to a low number of reported incidents in the season
- Advanced the organisation's water policy agenda by participating in local Murray Darling Basin Authority meetings, ensuring the voice of irrigating growers was heard by water regulators
- Promoted the cotton industry at the Coleambally Food & Farm Festival. Importantly, participation in local events such as these helps secure cotton's social licence in local communities
- Attended the AgVision Careers Day in conjunction with the organisation's Education Coordinator, an important opportunity to promote our industry as a career destination of choice to hundreds of young people, helping to secure the industry's workforce pipeline into the future
- Helped organise a tour of the valley for senior Better Cotton Initiative staff, a great opportunity to cement the relationship with this global organisation and promote the sustainability and responsible production credentials of Australian cotton growers

*Image: Cotton Australia Southern Valleys Regional Manager Honi Anderson (centre) with Carrathool growers Peter and Caroline Tuohy. Peter is a member of Cotton Australia's Board.*

# COTTON AUSTRALIA BOARD



**Simon Corish**  
Chairman  
Cotton Grower  
Goondiwindi, Qld



**Hamish McIntyre**  
Deputy Chairman  
Cotton Grower  
St George &  
Dirranbandi, Qld



**Fleur Anderson**  
Cotton Grower &  
Community Relations  
Executive  
Theodore, Qld



**Stuart Armitage**  
Cotton Grower  
Darling Downs, Qld



**Nigel Burnett**  
Cotton Grower  
Emerald, Qld



**Jeremy Callachor**  
Chief Executive  
Officer  
Namoi Cotton



**Bob Dall'Alba**  
Executive Director  
and Country Head  
Olam



**Barb Grey**  
Cotton Grower  
Mungindi, NSW



**Chris Hogendyk**  
Cotton Grower  
Warren, NSW



**Peter Tuohey**  
Cotton Grower  
Carrathool, NSW

# COTTON AUSTRALIA STAFF



**Adam Kay**  
Chief Executive  
Officer



**Michael Murray**  
General Manager



**Honi Anderson**  
Regional Manager –  
Riverina & Southern  
Valleys



**Renee Anderson**  
Regional Manager  
– Central Highlands  
(part time)



**Angela  
Bradburn**  
Policy Officer



**Bronwyn  
Christensen**  
Regional Manager –  
Dawson Valley (part time)



**Dr Nicola Cottee**  
Policy Officer  
(Research Direction  
& Stewardship)



**Samuel  
Evangelinos**  
Communications  
Officer



**Rebecca Fing**  
Workforce & Training  
Coordinator (part  
time)



**Jane Hill**  
Regional Manager –  
St George,  
Dirranbandi (part time)



**Rick Kowitz**  
myBMP Manager



**Chris Larsen**  
Communications  
Manager



**Felicity Muller**  
Policy Officer



**Mary O'Brien**  
Regional Manager –  
Darling Downs (part  
time)



**Chris O'Hare**  
Administration  
Assistant



**Nicole Scott**  
myBMP Customer  
Service Officer (part  
time)



**Paul Sloman**  
Regional Manager  
– Namoi, Gwydir,  
Walgett, Bourke



**Brooke  
Summers**  
Project Lead – Cotton  
To Market & Cotton  
LEADS™ (part time)



**Claudia Vicary**  
Project Officer –  
AgSkilled



**Cate Wild**  
Regional Manager –  
Macintyre Valley (part  
time)



**Julie Wise**  
Regional Manager  
– Macquarie Valley  
(part time)



**Therese Wooden**  
Finance Manager



**Rochelle Zakher**  
Executive Assistant  
(part time)

# FINANCIAL SUMMARY

2016-17

## INCOME

YEAR	LEVY	OTHER INCOME
2012/2013	6,993,814	306,460
2013/2014	4,992,797	423,538
2014/2015	3,473,309	507,722
2015/2016	2,319,332	299,891
2016/2017	2,983,310	601,211

## OPERATING EXPENDITURE INCLUDING CAPITAL

	OPERATING	CAPITAL
2012/2013	3,503,139	99,973
2013/2014	3,379,617	7,267
2014/2015	3,694,123	62,456
2015/2016	3,957,444	49,994
2016/2017	3,792,619	22,207

## OPERATING EXPENDITURE BY PROGRAM

	2016/2017	2015/2016
Board and Executive	581,633	605,042
Policy and Advocacy	509,262	504,094
Affiliations	170,364	138,024
Communications & Engagement	777,165	884,151
Grower Services	485,431	527,667
myBMP	257,014	268,189
Research	117,357	133,565
Education	102,499	131,967
Administration	210,226	203,491
Office Overheads	581,668	561,254
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3,792,619</b>	<b>3,957,444</b>

Levy Contribution	73%	67%
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