



**COUNTRY ROAD**

**MEDIA RELEASE**  
**One Year On – Projects Have Improved Biodiversity  
in Australian Cotton Landscapes**

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Over the last 12 months a unique partnership between Landcare Australia, Country Road and the cotton industry has resulted in 34 hectares of biodiversity improvements, including the planting of native species in the NSW Namoi Valley.

Funded by a corporate contribution and the sale of Verified Australian Cotton Heritage Sweats, Country Road has committed \$600,000 over three years, with funds so far invested in two iconic projects near Narrabri and Boggabri, managed by Landcare Australia.

"It's brilliant to see the impact this partnership has had in just one year. Country Road is so proud to support the great work being undertaken by local cotton farmers to leave a positive biodiversity legacy" Elle Roseby, Managing Director, Country Road

The project has seen weeks of restoration work including planting thousands of native trees and grasses on properties "Glencoe" and "Merriendi" on the Namoi River, both owned by local farming families.

"Landcare Australia is very proud of the achievements of this partnership to date. The project will assist to increase biodiversity, restore local ecosystems, protect soil health, provide natural habitats for threatened species, improve water quality and contribute to the sustainable management and productivity of the landscape." Dr Shane Norrish, CEO Landcare Australia said.

The work draws on a 2019 Cotton Research and Development Corporation (CRDC) project that mapped biodiversity in Australian cotton landscapes, identified threatened and endangered species and recommended ways to protect them.

According to Cotton Australia, biodiversity is an important sustainability focus for the Australian cotton industry that needs to be addressed at both farm and landscape scales.

"This project is not only providing significant funds for implementing projects, it is showcasing the benefits of improving biodiversity to other cotton farmers in the region and beyond," Cotton Australia CEO Adam Kay said.

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“We know our farms provide critical habitat for Australia’s native plants and animals, and when managed well these areas also provide natural pest control, improve soil health and store and sequester carbon,” he said.

The first project kicked off at the Kahl’s family farm near Narrabri NSW, where part of the Namoi River is being revegetated and stock excluded to increase habitat and shelter for native animals, reduce erosion and improve water quality.

The second project is with the Watson family at “Merriendi” near Boggabri where 3.7 kilometres of trees and grasses are being planted to improve ecology along the Namoi River on a newly acquired property.

Plans are underway for projects three, four and five which will all be located in priority biodiversity zones. The Australian cotton industry is providing additional support through the CRDC and Australian Government’s National Landcare Program Smart Farming Partnership Initiative’s- *Cotton Landcare Tech Innovations 2021 project*.

“This includes a five-hectare research trial by the University of New England to investigate which revegetation methods have the greatest survival rates on floodplain soils, drone plantings and a native plant propagation training workshop that’s been held with Kamilaroi traditional owners,” CRDC natural resource R&D Manager, Ms Stacey Vogel said.

Cotton industry research shows that while there have been some great steps forward, more needs to be done to protect and improve biodiversity on cotton farms and adjacent landscapes.

“We hope this partnership with Landcare Australia and Country Road will help focus industry efforts, accelerate our biodiversity work and provide a lasting legacy for our farmers, their communities and the natural environment,” she said.

#### **The Stats So Far**

- Hectares repaired via weed control and planting native species: 34
- Number of tree planting days: 20
- Kilometres of river frontage improved: 6.5 km
- Country Road have raised \$200,000
- Habitat enhanced for threatened species like the Koala, Large-eared Pied Bat and Barking Owl

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