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Virtual reality brings cotton to the classroom

Cotton Australia has proudly launched its new virtual reality (VR) education resource – an immersive video that takes viewers onto a cotton farm from the comfort of their home.

The VR video is the latest addition to Cotton Australia’s suite of educational resources informing city and country residents about the Australian cotton industry.

Cotton Australia Education Coordinator Jenny Hughes said through the power of VR, the public can witness first-hand the Australian cotton industry in action.

“Technology, in all its forms and platforms, is the key tool being used in our classrooms to spark the imaginations of our children and give them the skills they need to succeed in life,” Ms Hughes said.

“We are determined to provide engaging, informative and cutting-edge digital education resources to ensure teachers and students have the latest information about Australian cotton available at their fingertips.

“We are very excited to now begin rolling out our immersive VR video and accompanying 360-degree version of the film (for viewing on the internet). Through the power of 360-degree cameras and drones, the video takes you onto a cotton farm to explore fields and crops and discover key information about our industry – all without leaving your chair.”

This video stars Emerald-based grower, and Cotton Australia deputy chair, Nigel Burnett and his family.

Cotton Australia General Manager Michael Murray said it was hoped the VR resource will boost the knowledge of all Australians about cotton, not just students.

“We know there is a lot of misinformation about our industry swirling around the public. We trust this new tool will correct those myths and illustrate how sustainable, world-leading, ethical and environmentally-conscious our growers are,” Mr Murray said.

“It is incredibly important Cotton Australia does all it can to bring the country to the city. Most cotton farms are several hours and hundreds of kilometres away from metropolitan areas – which is often where many vocal critics of our industry reside.

“For us to boost our industry’s transparency and to correct misconceptions about cotton, we needed to find new ways to engage with people who, through the tyranny of distance, cannot easily travel from the city to a cotton farm to experience first-hand what our growers do. We have high hopes that this VR and 360-degree video will go some way towards paving that path of knowledge about Australian cotton between the city and the bush.”

The film is now available on Cotton Australia’s YouTube Channel, with viewers simply needing to click and drag the video player to take in the 360-degree sights. Cotton Australia will, once appropriate and COVID-safe, hit the road with its collection of VR goggles and appear at community shows, events and schools in city and rural areas to ensure as many people as possible can safely discover life on a cotton farm through VR.

Watch the VR video here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D8g0ZQ2Y92w>

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