

Cotton Australia: Current and Future Activities

JANUARY 1ST – MARCH 31ST 2022

Policy updates      

Water

- Cotton Australia continues to advocate on a wide range of water issues that are relevant to our growers in Qld and in NSW. Much of our water work is in collaboration with irrigator groups and membership organisations, including the NFF Water Committee, the National Irrigators' Council, the NSW Irrigators' Council Queensland Farmers' Federation and the many valley based irrigator groups.
- Murray-Darling Basin Plan - we have been advocating for:
 - A \$2 billion commitment to complementary measures to ensure the environmental outcomes from the environmental water procured under the Plan is optimized and delivers real benefits.
 - The return to the irrigation pool water that has been over recovered in some valleys.
 - The delivery of the full 605GLs worth of Sustainable Diversion Limit Adjustment Mechanism projects.
- NSW Floodplain Harvesting
 - We have supported the efforts of the NSW Irrigators' Council and the affected valley-based groups to get an equitable solution to the volumetric licencing of Floodplain Harvesting, in a highly politicised environment where the NSW Legislative Council has disallowed crucial regulations twice, while at the same time agreeing, and receiving legal advice, that volumetric licenses should be issued.
- Metering
 - Cotton Australia has been working in both NSW and QLD to ensure effective and cost-effective metering. In particular we have been working closely with the QLD Government to ensure the implementation issues seen in NSW are recognised and lessons learnt.
- Pricing
 - Cotton Australia continues to lobby to ensure the long-term issue of some QLD irrigators paying well in excess of the recognised Lower Bound prices are addressed, so there is equity among all QLD irrigators.
- Strategic Infrastructure Reserve Water
 - In QLD, Cotton Australia is working with the Dawson Valley irrigators for the timely renewal of the soon to expire leases on the Strategic Infrastructure Reserve water that was initially leased three years ago.

Stewardship

- Bayer have applied to the APVMA to amend the Bollgard3 RMP for Central Queensland. This is in response to the identified increased resistance risk posed by long season (>230 day) crops and follows lengthy consultation with the TIMS Committee, the CQ Working Group and CQ Grower Meetings. The key requested change is that any growers who intend to grow cotton for longer than 230 days must plant additional refuge, equivalent of 10% unsprayed irrigated cotton. TIMS supports these changes,
- Regional meetings were held on the 17th and 18th August 2021 in Emerald and Moura. At these meetings the modelling information was presented to CQ growers, along with potential mitigation strategies, so that feedback could be considered as part of the normal Bayer and TIMS RMP processes.

Sustainability

- Cotton Australia continues to have input into NFF's Australian Agriculture Sustainability Framework (AASF). The objective is to create a standardised and efficient voluntary system to demonstrate sustainable farming outcomes, generate new

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commercial value, and meet new and emerging market needs.

- The framework is informed by Australian industry and environmental frameworks; notably the cotton industry's myBMP program has been a leading source of components for its themes of: environmental stewardship, people and community, economic resilience. These themes are consistent with the Australian cotton industry's sustainability framework PLANET. PEOPLE. PADDOCK.
- The final phase of the project (later this year) will test the 'proof of concept' including the natural capital partnership that NFF has recently forged with the Macdoch Foundation's 'Farming for the Future' program.

Mining & CSG

- Cotton Australia recognises that increasingly intensive agriculture and resource extraction industries, such as mining and coal seam gas extraction, intersect.
- Cotton Australia's policy is that the productive capacity of the land should not be impaired, the water resources that we rely on should not be impacted, and participating land holders should be appropriately compensated.
- We also recognise that across our grower base there is a wide range of views about what co-existence is and how it can be managed.
- Cotton Australia, along with other peak agricultural groups, has worked with Arrow Energy to develop a Voluntary Deviated Well Agreement, that land holders who have Deviated Wells under their land may choose to sign.
- Cotton Australia has not endorsed this agreement, but acknowledges it has had input and believes the agreement merits the consideration of eligible landholders, while being very mindful that it will not suit all landholders.
- More importantly, Cotton Australia is concerned about the possible economic impact of landscape-wide subsidence, and is working with government, other peak bodies and the resource industry to ensure that there is a clear and robust pathway for remediation and/or compensation, should economic impacts materialise.

Workforce

- The Queensland Government has announced a \$5 million Agribusiness Strategy, consisting of an Agriculture Skills Fund, a TAFE Agricultural, Rural and Regional Strategy, and a Beef Processing Skills Fund.
- Cotton Australia, along with other key industry stakeholders, have been invited to participate on working groups to prioritise funding, which will also include representation from Jobs Queensland and Queensland Government departments.
- The working group will recommend strategies, which could include a mixture of accredited training, skillsets, micro-credentials and workforce development. This training is important in staff retention and skill development of key staff.

AgSkilled

- AgSkilled is a NSW Government funded initiative that Cotton Australia successfully lobbied for that provides free training.
- Delivered Cotton Pest Management courses in Narrabri and Leeton.
- Funded more than 130 places in training for members of the cotton industry including Truck licencing training, WHS training, Advanced Spray training, Drones in Agriculture and the GROW Course (Growing Regionally Outstanding Women).
- Electrical Test and Tag training has been included as an AgSkilled funded course.
- AgSkilled has partnered with new RTOs to increase training availability and choice.

Submissions made this quarter

- [Proposed Mining Act and Petroleum \(Onshore\) Act amendments - January 2022](#)
- [Revised Large-Scale Solar Energy Guidelines - February 2022](#)

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myBMP update ✓

- A myBMP workshop was recently held at Douglas Station in the Northern Territory. It was co-organised by Dominic Calder from NT Farmers and Cotton Australia's myBMP Manager Rob Crothers. The workshop was well attended by growers, local agronomists, and industry people.
- Tipperary Station has since requested an audit and is likely to become the first cotton growing property in the NT to become certified.
- myBMP visits are being planned for southern NSW and the Macquarie Valley months -- please contact your Cotton Australia Regional Manager if you would like a one-on-one myBMP session.
 - During the first quarter of 2022: We had a great increase in farms achieving myBMP certification, bringing the total to 313 farms certified in myBMP in our industry.

Communications update

Media (releases generated by CA)

- Participants chosen for 2022 Australian Future Cotton Leaders program
- Agricultural Leaders Unite to drive Spray-Drift best practice
- Australian Cotton tipped for second best year on record
- Cotton Australia joins Queensland regulator in Spray Drift reminder
- New Partnership sees Australian Cotton commitment by children's brand Cotton On Kids
- Double the celebrations for Australian Cotton Industry in 2022
- 2022 Australian Cotton Conference Launched
- Australia's Cotton Grower of the Year and High Achiever of the Year announced
- Cotton Australia Welcomes ATMAC Grant Phase 2
- Quality Australian cotton gains global support

Digital

- Production of Cotton Australia's debut podcast – *From the Field* – is underway. Season one of the podcast will span five episodes and feature conversations with growers and industry leaders around five core themes. The podcast is part of the industry's effort to rebuild public trust.
- Cotton Australia turns 50 in 2022, and to help celebrate, a commemorative branding suite has been produced to raise public awareness of Cotton Australia and the industry's achievements.
- Audio advertising – a campaign was launched in March on audio streaming platform Spotify to raise awareness of the Australian cotton industry in metropolitan audiences. The campaign has reached at least 30,000 city-based people.
- A new tool has been developed to engage audiences about the Australian cotton industry. The interactive video quiz tool allows website visitors to watch videos about the cotton industry, and then test their knowledge by completing a short online quiz. The tool will be promoted to school students in particular.

Education update

Projects

- We have focused on cotton careers this quarter, and would like to thank the two growers that have successfully registered in the AgCareerSTART program. Cotton Australia has partnered with NFF (who are administering this program). We hope to attract 10 growers to participate over the two years and give more under 25's an opportunity to work in and learn about our industry.

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- We have also partnered with Central Queensland University and the Get Excited 4 Careers in Agriculture project, which will establish a unified cross-sector approach to delivering quality career guidance for K-10 students in rural and regional Australia. The Riverina in NSW has been chosen to work with cotton with the face-to-face engagement commencing in May.
- In February, we attended the Farm Days event at Sydney Showground hosted by the Royal Agricultural Society of NSW. We presented to more than 300 primary school students about cotton with a hands-on investigation on making water go up-hill – there was fantastic engagement and learning.
- In March, we launched the Pitchathon competition. This is part of the Threads & Opportunities Symposium hosted by CSIRO that Cotton Australia has sponsored. Secondary students and undergraduates are invited to submit a short video on any of the four themes for the symposium with \$2000 in prizes to the winners.
- Planning for Teach the Teacher events in cotton growing regions for local school educators is underway.

Cotton to Market update

News

- A new partnership between Cotton Australia and Cotton On Kids featuring cotton growing families has been launched recognising the quality of Australian-grown cotton, considered among the best and most sustainable in the world. Cotton On Kids, a major children's clothing brand and part of Australia's largest global retailer Cotton On Group, has committed to using quality Australian cotton to produce more than four million items of children's clothing. In launching Australian grown cotton into the brand's raw materials portfolio, Cotton On Kids is also telling the stories of two cotton farming families from Emerald, in Queensland's Central Highlands region, who were filmed in the field earlier in the season.
- Cotton Australia has secured around \$1.5m from the federal government to assist in securing new global markets for Australian cotton. The Agricultural Trade and Market Access Cooperation (ATMAC) grant builds on the first phase of the Export Market Diversification Strategy.
- Cotton Australia has used a new collaboration with a leading Japanese shirtmaker to highlight growing global endorsement of the quality and environmental credentials of Australian cotton. Kamakura Shirts in Japan has launched its first 'Premium Pure White Shirt' made from Australian cotton with the support from the Consulate-General of Australia in Osaka and by utilizing the Japan-Australia Economic Partnership Agreement.

Other news

LNP politician dinner

The Cotton Australia Board hosted a dinner with the Parliamentary Leadership Team of the Queensland LNP. The dinner was attended by the Leader of the Opposition, David Crisafulli, along with a wide representation of local members and opposition spokespeople covering portfolios including Agriculture, Water, Energy, Transport, Finance and Local Government.

The annual dinner is an opportunity to develop relationships and discuss key policy issues that affect the cotton industry. Cotton Australia will host a similar dinner with Government Ministers and their advisors in May.

Cotton Australia values the opportunity to have strong relationships that allow for the regular discussion of critical issues. Cotton Australia Chairman Nigel Burnett took the opportunity while in Brisbane to also meet with CRDC Chair Richard Haire, QFF CEO Jo Sheppard and Queensland Director-General for Agriculture Bob Gee.

Cotton Australia meets MDBA Chair Sir Angus Houston

Murray-Darling Basin Authority Chairman Sir Angus Houston toured parts of south-west Queensland to 'listen and learn' about water issues last week, with Cotton Australia joining him for part of the journey.

Cotton Australia's General Manager Michael Murray and cotton growers met with Sir Angus and advocated for our industry during his visit to Boggabilla, Goondiwindi, Dirranbandi, St George and Roma.

International Women's Day: celebrating women in our industry

In March, Cotton Australia joined in global celebrations for International Women's Day.

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We acknowledge the impact women make in our society, and we particularly recognise all women working in, and connected with, the Australian cotton industry.

To help celebrate the day, Cotton Australia prepared a series of social media posts and stories about women in our industry, to highlight the significant role they play in making Australian cotton a world-leading agricultural sector.

Potential 'game-changers' chosen for cotton industry's 2022 emerging leaders program

Australia's cotton industry has selected 15 of the country's most outstanding, up and coming cotton stakeholders for its premier entry-level leadership program.

Eight women and seven men from across NSW, Queensland and the ACT will participate in the 2022 Australian Future Cotton Leaders Program (AFCLP), which is run by Cotton Australia with support from the Cotton Research and Development Corporation (CRDC).

The program aims to develop their leadership knowledge, skills and experience so that they, in turn, can play key roles in further developing the industry. [Read more here.](#)

Dates for your diary

Sydney Royal Easter Show

8th – 19th April 2022

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