

22 October 2019

Dear Sir / Madam

Re: **PaTH Industry Pilot application – AgFood Connect**

Cotton Australia is the peak body that represents the interests of Australia’s 1,400 cotton growers supporting about 1,200 cotton farming families in NSW, Queensland and now into Victoria.

While our production can vary significantly from year-to-year, dependent on rainfall and water availability, it is worth on average \$1.5 billion to \$2 billion in annual export earnings and employs approximately 10,000 people nationally. Approximately 30% of the Australian cotton producing area and workforce is located in Queensland.

I am writing to you in relation to the PaTH Industry Pilot application – AgFood Connect which aims to place young people in the southern and western regions of Queensland into available traineeships, apprenticeships and full-time and part-time jobs in the Food & Fibre, Agribusiness industries and the very diverse agricultural supply and value chains.

Cotton is produced around Southern Queensland towns such as Goondiwindi, St George, Dalby, Talwood, Dirranbandi and many other smaller communities.

We understand that this project will prepare young people for work through delivery of employability skills and industry and job specific training which will provide candidates with the skills they will need to commence in entry level positions within the cotton industry. We also understand that providing young people with work experience is a key component of this project.

From the cotton industries perspective, through the PaTH Industry Pilot application – AgFood Connect, jobs that could be available and qualifications required may include:

Assistant Farmhand	<i>Certificate I in Rural Operations</i>
Farmhand	<i>Certificate II in Agriculture</i>
Field Equipment Operator	<i>Certificate III in Agriculture</i>
Field Supervisor	<i>Certificate IV in Agriculture</i>
Farm Business Manager	<i>Diploma of Agriculture or Rural Business Management</i>
Rural Business Manager	<i>Advanced Diploma of Agriculture or Rural Business Management</i>

Currently, as a direct result of the ongoing drought, production is well below average in many agricultural sectors and in particular the irrigated cotton industry of southern



Queensland. Many employers are choosing this time to upskill their current workforce in readiness for when the seasons turn more positive. Therefore, we cannot confirm that we will have jobs available during the project period from January 2020 to June 2021.

However, should cotton production areas increase young people who have successfully completed the training and preparation components of the project will be well positioned to gain work within the cotton industry.

We strongly support and endorse AgFood Connect as a project that will improve the skills and preparedness of young people for work in the cotton industry and will assist young people to gain employment.

To discuss our support further please contact Paul Sloman, Policy Officer either by email, pauls@cotton.org.au or mobile 0448 094 883.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Murray".

Michael Murray
General Manager,
Cotton Australia