

28 November 2019

Mr Justin Clancy  
Member of the Legislative Assembly  
Member for Albury  
Chair of the Committee on Investment, Industry and Regional Development  
Electronically: online submission form

### **Support for drought affected communities in NSW**

Dear Mr Clancy,

Cotton Australia is the peak representative body for Australia's cotton growing industry, supporting about 1,400 cotton farming families from 152 regional communities across NSW, Queensland and northern Victoria.

In acknowledgement that our communities are currently affected by drought, we welcome the opportunity to provide a submission to this Committee on Investment, Industry and Regional Development inquiry.

Managing drought is a complex issue. Cotton Australia applauds the Committee for taking up this inquiry and for examining a wide scope of factors relating to drought, regional businesses, economies and communities, including preparedness and recovery. We do not currently have the capacity or necessarily hold the expertise to make detailed comments about wider community support. This knowledge and insight resides within the affected communities themselves. Cotton Australia therefore urges the Committee to engage with these communities as much as possible and are happy to facilitate further contacts.

We are supportive of drought support programs and efforts by the government to help underpin the security and resilience of regional, rural and remote communities especially in times of drought.

Clearly relief akin to that provided to those directly involved in farming should also be extended to local non-farm businesses and the councils in these areas, not just immediate support but also measures that help stimulate recovery. Some examples would be pay roll tax relief and waiving or support for other government fees and charges (electricity, rates, registration).

An indication of the importance of cotton community resilience is the tranche of research work our Cotton Research and Development Corporation has commissioned, supported by cotton levy funds:

- 'Thresholds for resilience in regional cotton communities' being undertaken by the University of Melbourne. This project is:
  - Assessing the resilience of three communities in cotton growing regions (Warren, Walgett and Goondiwindi)

- Involving community perspectives in assessing and planning for regional resilience to identify locally relevant response options, and
- Building local capacity to adapt and enact opportunities for building resilience.
- 'Cotton industry social and wellbeing sustainability indicators' by University of Canberra. This project is helping to understand social outcomes of the cotton industry in Australia and identify meaningful indicators for industry wellbeing and social capital to understand change over time.

We would be happy to share with the Committee the contacts for these projects and preliminary findings.

Cotton Australia thanks the Committee for the opportunity to make this brief submission. If the Committee would like more information or hear directly from Cotton Australia, we would be very happy to follow up with more information and/or to appear as an inquiry witness.

Please contact Michael Murray, General Manager, Cotton Australia (0427 707 868 or [michaelm@cotton.org.au](mailto:michaelm@cotton.org.au)) for further information

Yours sincerely,



Michael Murray,  
General Manager,  
Cotton Australia