



Cotton Australia Mining Policy

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Cotton Australia

Cotton Australia is the key representative body for the Australian cotton growing industry. It helps the industry to work together to be world competitive and sustainable, and also tell the good news about the industry's achievements. Cotton Australia determines and drives the industry's strategic direction, retaining its strong focus on R&D, promoting the value of the industry, reporting on its environmental credibility, and implementing policy objectives in consultation with its stakeholders.

Cotton Australia works to ensure an environment conducive to efficient and sustainable cotton production. It has a key role in Best Management Practices (*MyBMP*), an environmental management program for growers. This work has seen a significant improvement in the environmental performance of the industry, with huge improvements in water use efficiency, significant reductions in pesticide use, and millions of dollars invested into R&D.

The Australian cotton industry directly employs thousands of Australians and this year will contribute over \$2 billion to the Australia economy.

For further information or discussion on the content of this policy please contact Cotton Australia's Mining and Coal Seam Gas Policy Officer Sahil Prasad on 0406 598 054 or sahilp@cotton.org.au .



The mining industry is a rapidly expanding industry in Queensland (QLD) and New South Wales (NSW). Its activities overlap cotton production in many areas of Central and Southern Queensland and North-West NSW.

This policy is a broad statement of principles. Cotton Australia, its members and growers reserve the right to implement these principles in a variety of ways, which reflect the different physical, historical and regulatory frameworks which apply across the cotton growing regions.

As an overriding principle Cotton Australia will not accept any negative impact on the property rights of cotton growers, arising out of the activities of the mining industry.

Any impact intended or unintended must be fully compensated by the mining industry and guaranteed by government.

While Cotton Australia will work with both Government and the mining industry to develop the appropriate industry and regulatory framework, the responsibility to protect growers from negative impacts rests with Government.

In developing its Mining Policy Cotton Australia recognises that the mining industry offers potential economic benefits to Australia. However, without proper regulation and enforcement the mining industry also poses significant risks to the Australian Cotton Industry.

Cotton Australia's Mining Policy seeks to:

- *Protect the productive capacity of agricultural land from mining extraction activities.*
 - That Cotton Australia opposes any mining development unless and until it can be definitively proven, that the development will have no impact on the productive capacity of the land.
 - That any existing or approved mines are rehabilitated to their pre-development productive capacity, within five-years of ceasing production.
 - A mining development approval must include a comprehensive rehabilitation plan, with clear and enforceable timeframes.



Protect the sustainability of aquifers and surface water sources that service irrigated and dry land cotton production and their communities.

- There can be no negative impact on the water property (including quantity, quality, access and deliverability) right that is currently held by existing users.
- All decisions related to water resource management and the mining industry must be made with full access to, and consideration of, independent, high quality, peer reviewed science.
- Independent and comprehensive water quality and quantity monitoring, evaluation and reporting networks must be funded by the mining companies. The outcome of these monitoring, evaluation and reporting networks must include independent, peer-reviewable reports characterized by the highest scientific standards. These would include the requirement for comprehensive baseline assessments.
- The “water balance” and “water quality” must be maintained to ensure aquifer and surface water sustainability.
- A robust water-licensing, measuring and monitoring scheme must be used to account for all mining related water and form part of a broader state water licencing process, with similar requirements and guidelines as current alluvial water legislation.
- Industry best practice for all construction, operation and rehabilitation of mining infrastructure and is overseen by government regulation and ensuring compliance with appropriate infringement penalties and remediation requirements.
- All activities must be carried out in accordance with environmental best practice.

Amenity, Health and Social Impacts

- All mining projects should seek to minimize the social impacts and implications of their activities on both rural communities and miners themselves. Cotton Australia recommends the adoption of Social Impact Assessments which provide baseline, predictive and actual data to greater understand the impact of mining activities on communities and assist in the development of policy to minimize any harm on these communities.
- The amenity of traditional cotton growing regions should be preserved. This includes, but not limited to, impacts from dust, noise, air-blast, light, traffic movements, and vibration.
- Cotton Australia recommends the adoption of independent Health Impact Assessments which provide baseline, predictive and actual data to greater understand the impact of mining activities on the health of communities and assist in the development of policy to minimize any harm on these communities.



- Directly affected individuals and communities must be adequately resourced to assess and respond to the mining approval process.

Cotton Australia respects the right of landholders to enter into agreements with resource companies, and believes negotiations should be consistent with the following principles.

- Allow for flexibility in negotiating Access Arrangements or Conduct and Compensation Agreements (herein referred to as “land access agreements”), so that the focus is on minimising the impact of mining activities on the land and landholder.
- All land access agreements to recognize case-by-case complexities of each scenario and cannot be addressed using a “one-size-fits-all” approach.
- All access terms are not to be inconsistent with requirements stipulated under Cotton Australia’s *myBMP* programme.
- Strengthen compensation arrangements in both States to ensure all real losses for landholders are compensated for.
- All land access arrangements should enhance the value of the farming business.

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