More than ever before, Australian cotton needs a strong representative body to champion the interests of the industry and growers.

Post-drought, the industry still faces significant pressures at both strategic and operational levels. Access to, and competition for, natural resources has never been more challenging. Cotton also faces input cost pressure, which impacts profitability, as well as external pressure on operations, particularly regarding sustainability. Arguably, these pressures have never been greater.

Cotton Australia’s five-year strategic plan sets out the priorities and business areas we will focus on to advance the interests of the Australian cotton growing industry and contribute to the Vision 2029 of “Australian cotton, carefully grown, naturally world’s best.”

The implementation of this new five-year plan comes in the same year as a federal election, which reinforces the need for a strong advocate to walk the corridors of power and influence stakeholders in a manner that delivers positive change for growers. The Cotton Australia Strategic Plan 2013–2018 is the next phase in delivering Vision 2029 – a long-term strategy created in 2009 to set aspirational goals for the industry's development.

Cotton Australia engaged growers and other key stakeholders in the industry to develop this Strategic Plan, which establishes the organisation’s focus and provides a roadmap for the next five years. In delivering on this strategy, Cotton Australia will uphold its core values of respect, openness and integrity.

We invite you to join us in building on the gains already made to help further the interests of cotton – a successful, resilient and enduring industry.

Lyndon Mulligan
Cotton Australia Chair, 2013
### Industry Vision
Australian cotton, carefully grown, naturally world’s best – Differentiated, Responsible, Tough, Successful, Respected, Capable

### CA's Drivers
- Resource access, competition and sustainability – water, land, workforce, institutional capacity, environmental health, energy, greenhouse gases, climate variability
- Profitability – increasing the efficiency of cotton growing and value of the crop
- Well-being – social, economic and environmental contribution to cotton communities and Australia improves and is recognised (social license)

### CA's Purpose
To advance the interests of the Australian cotton growing industry

### CA's Competitive Advantage
- Focused on cotton with strong and enduring links to growers (grass roots), value chain, research, government, other peak farming bodies and the international cotton community
- Ability to speak and act freely in the best interests of the cotton growing industry

### CA's Values
- Respect – We respect the views, opinions and concerns of others at all times
- Openness – We ensure that information is available and accessible to our members, staff and by all relevant partners
- Integrity – We operate with honesty, decency, consistency and courage

### CA's Priorities

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Objectives</th>
<th>Policy and Advocacy</th>
<th>Research Direction</th>
<th>Stewardship</th>
<th>Community and Capacity</th>
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<tr>
<td>To influence government, supply chain and markets to improve the cotton crop's value</td>
<td>To ensure cotton RD&amp;E is able to provide a continual pipeline of innovations to industry</td>
<td>Enhance cotton’s biosecurity, biotechnology, WH&amp;S and environmental stewardship</td>
<td>To improve capacity of cotton growers and value of cotton to the wider community</td>
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<tr>
<td>Government policy aligned and effective Supply chain efficient and effective Value of Australian cotton crop improved</td>
<td>RD&amp;E system resourced and capable Innovation creation/adoption rates</td>
<td>Stewardship preparedness/responsiveness Social license maintained and strengthened</td>
<td>Capable cotton communities Value of cotton recognised and improving</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsiveness of policy and advocacy Impact of effort policy and advocacy</td>
<td>Advice impact on CRDC strategy/ investment Cotton Innovation Network improves RD&amp;E</td>
<td>Facilitate preparedness and responsiveness CA advice considered and integrated</td>
<td>Rising leadership role interest and capacity Increased understanding of modern cotton</td>
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<tr>
<th>KPIs (Priority Specific)</th>
<th>Cotton Australia trusted and respected by industry, government and the community (membership, participation and satisfaction) Quality of services provided by Cotton Australia (timeliness, accuracy, participation and satisfaction)</th>
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</table>

### Strategies
- CGA (grass roots) policy engagement
- Policy positions, strategies developed Policy and advocacy
- Align rural sector policy positions
- Influence government and supply chain Key issues
- Position myBMP and Australian cotton
- Sustainability/access to key resources

<table>
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<th>CRDC strategy and investment</th>
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<td>Annual investment advice</td>
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<td>Strategy and science reviews</td>
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<td>Cotton Innovation Network</td>
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<td>Lead network (chair)</td>
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<td>Broker new partnerships</td>
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<td>myBMP</td>
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<td>Culture continually improving myBMP</td>
<td>CRDC strategy and investment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Update my BMP modules</td>
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</table>

### Enabling Systems
Industry communications and engagement – Cotton Australia’s team actively listens to industry through on-going, organised and responsive engagement

Human resource management – staff have: technical and interpersonal skills; communicate effectively; clear roles; are motivated, dynamic; and operate individually and in teams as required

Financial – clear, efficient and effective systems for managing variable income and allocating, monitoring, controlling and reporting expenditure across the priorities and strategies

Information systems – establish system for accessing up to date facts on cotton industry and appropriate information and communications technology (ICT)
COTTON AUSTRALIA

• Profile of Cotton Australia
Cotton Australia was established in 1972 to support Australian cotton growers and represent their interests. In addition, Cotton Australia now has responsibility for driving cotton research and development direction, advising the Cotton Research and Development Corporation on grower research and development priorities.

• Purpose
to advance the interests of the Australian cotton growing industry

• Our strength – Cotton Australia
– Is solely focused on cotton, with strong and enduring links to growers
– Directly channels grower input into research priorities that provide economic, environmental and social dividends to the industry
– Has broad and deep reach throughout the industry in Australia and overseas
– Represents Australian cotton’s interests to government, other industries and the international cotton community
– Is independent, able to speak and act freely in the best interests of the cotton growing industry

• Values
– Respect – We respect the views, opinions and concerns of others at all times
– Openness – We ensure that information is available and accessible by our members, staff and all relevant partners
– Integrity – We operate with honesty, decency, consistency and courage

CONTEXT AND STRATEGIC FOCUS TO 2018

– The Australian cotton industry is a regionally based and export-oriented industry. Cotton is grown on 1250 farms (in 2013). The major production areas are in Queensland and NSW.

– In recent years new cotton varieties, and favourable weather and market conditions, has seen an expansion in southern NSW cotton growing regions, reaching as far south as the Victorian border.

– Cotton is the seventh largest Australian agricultural industry in value terms after cattle, wheat, milk, sheepmeat, wool and poultry. Over 99% of the national crop is exported, which has generated in excess of $1 billion in export revenue per annum over the last 20 years. The gross value of production was almost $3 billion in the 2011/2012 season.

– In the last season, the Australian cotton industry produced a record 5.3 million bales, grown on 583,000 hectares.

– The average cotton farm provides jobs for 8 people, and in 2012 cotton provided employment for 8,000 people across northern NSW and southern QLD alone. The industry directly supports more than 150 regional communities in NSW and QLD.

– The Australian cotton industry is highly productive and yields high quality cotton. Our growers produce yields two and a half times the world average – and have done for 20 years running. The Australian cotton industry has achieved a 40% increase in water productivity over the last decade.
The cotton industry’s strategic objectives are outlined in the ‘Cotton Industry Vision 2029’ document, developed in 2009 by leaders in the Australian cotton industry. It was designed to inspire and unify the industry, and considered goals over a 20-year timeframe in order to stretch thinking beyond the short-medium term and ensure a longer-term strategic focus.

The Cotton Industry Vision 2029 is – “Australian cotton, carefully grown, naturally world’s best”.

- The primary goals of Cotton Industry Vision 2029 are to make Australian cotton:
  
  • **Differentiated** – a world-leading supplier of an elite quality cotton that is highly sought in premium market segments
  
  • **Responsible** – the producer and supplier of the most environmentally and socially responsible cotton in the world
  
  • **Tough** – a resilient industry, equipped for future challenges
  
  • **Successful** – exciting new levels of performance that transform productivity and profitability of every sector of the industry
  
  • **Respected** – an industry recognised and valued by the wider community for its contribution to fibre and food needs of the world
  
  • **Capable** – an industry that retains, attracts and develops highly capable people

This Strategic Plan focuses Cotton Australia on addressing key challenges facing the industry:

- Resource access, competition and demonstrating sustainability – for water, land, workforce, institutional capacity, environmental health, energy, greenhouse gases, climate variability
- Profitability – the need to increase the efficiency of cotton growing and value of the crop
- Well-being – social, economic and environmental contribution to cotton communities and Australia improves and is recognised (maintaining the industry’s social licence).
HOW THE PLAN WAS DEVELOPED

Cotton Australia’s five year Strategic Plan sets out the priorities and business areas we will focus on to advance the interests of the Australian cotton growing industry and contribute to the Vision 2029 of “Australian cotton, carefully grown, naturally world’s best”.

The strategic planning process commenced early in 2012, and was developed over three phases of consultation and scanning, deliberating and drafting.

Consultation, input and testing for the plan was conducted through:

- An electronic online grower survey of more than 100 growers, capturing individual perspectives
- Workshops conducted by Cotton Australia regional managers with individual Cotton Grower Associations, to understand local level issues and brainstorm solutions and opportunities
- Input from grower representatives at Cotton Australia General Meetings during 2012
- Input from Cotton Australia’s board, comprising growers, ginners, marketers, agronomists and other sectors of the industry
- Discussions with key stakeholder groups, including government and other industry organisations.

The Cotton Australia Board approved the plan in February 2013.

There are four core priorities for Cotton Australia in 2013–2018. They are:

1. Policy and advocacy
2. Research direction
3. Stewardship
4. Community and capacity

These priorities are supported by supplementary functions:

- Industry communications and engagement
- Human resource management
- Financial systems
- Information systems
**INDUSTRY VISION**
Australian cotton, carefully grown naturally world's best - Differentiated, Responsible, Tough, Successful, Respected, Capable

**PURPOSE**
To advance the interests of the Australian cotton industry

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**POLICY AND ADVOCACY**

**RESEARCH DIRECTION**

**STEWARDSHIP**

**COMMUNITY AND CAPACITY**

---

**ENABLING SYSTEMS**
Industry communications and engagement
Human resource management
Financial systems
Information systems
1. Policy and advocacy strategic priority

1.1 Rationale

Cotton Australia is a strong and essential advocate for our industry. We champion the interests of the industry by influencing government policy and regulation, and engaging the supply chain to produce optimal outcomes. We are strong only because we represent a united industry that speaks on behalf of growers, and where an individual’s voice is lost amongst competing demands.

While strategic policy and advocacy issues are well defined, their nature changes over time. Currently Cotton Australia is responding to the following major trends:

- **Natural resources**: increasing competition for the resources required to produce cotton: land, water, people
- **Government resources**: these are shrinking, which influences how government engages with the community and increases competition for its attention
- **Commercial pressures**: agribusiness is consolidating, which influences competition and efficiencies. Input costs are also increasing
- **Community expectations**: demand for increased sustainability is rising. As stewards of the land, we are required to respond appropriately and with communities outside our own
- **Record crops**: growing and processing record crops in recent years has brought the requirement for adequate infrastructure and an efficient and effective supply chain into sharp focus. It also impacts all other policy and advocacy areas.

These trends are across the regulatory and commercial spheres, reinforcing the need for Cotton Australia to influence both government policy and the supply chain.

Cotton Australia engages with other industry bodies to extend our influence within the industry and beyond it. (See Page 16 for a full list of affiliates and stakeholders).

1.2 Purpose

**Objective**

- To influence government, supply and markets to improve the value of the cotton crop

**Outcomes sought**

- Government policy aligned and effective
- Supply chain efficient and effective
- Value of Australian cotton crop improves

**Key performance indicators**

- Cotton Australia is trusted and respected by policy and advocacy stakeholders (membership, participation and satisfaction)
- Quality of policy and advocacy services (timeliness, accuracy, participation and satisfaction)
- Responsiveness – acting on issues identified by growers/industry
- Impact – what happened to issues addressed (stop–hold–remove–improve)
Policy & Advocacy

1.3 Approach

Cotton Australia’s approach to policy and advocacy has three key elements:

- **Industry engagement** – to identify issues, determine priorities and establish industry’s position
- **Policy and advocacy** – align positions with affiliates and influence government and supply chain
- **Priority issues** – continually scanning and adapting the range of policy and advocacy issues

**Industry engagement**
- Engage Cotton Grower Associations (grass roots) in dialogue on what the local and industry issues are and how Australian and overseas policy, societal and market trends influence them
- Develop policy positions and strategies to pursue them and provide feedback to growers through Cotton Grower Associations

**Policy and advocacy**
- Align policy positions and strategies within the cotton industry and other rural sectors to:
  - Strengthen our positions through a common voice
  - Have a greater impact through pooling resources and implementing strategies together
- Influence government and supply chain. Range of approaches include:
  - Active scanning and targeting – identifying the issues early and developing a plan internally and externally
  - Developing relationships – having a proactive approach of working with key influencers across government, and supply chain in Australia and overseas
  - Actively engaging in government policy – working with various processes run by government (e.g. inquiries, reviews)

- Supply chain advocacy – analysing and discussing industry issues with the supply chain to identify constraints and potential opportunities
- Targeted campaigns – to address significant issues
- Action orientation – responding quickly/appropriately as required
- Feedback – communicating back to industry on action and achievements

**Priority issues**
- The priority issues for policy and advocacy are dynamic and will evolve over the next five years. At present they include:
  - Position myBMP and Australian cotton in the global market place
  - R&D – funding and support for existing and new participants to ensure R&D continues to underpin industry innovation
  - Resources – water, land and people and inputs (seed, chemicals, energy) to maintain access, address conflicts and ensure the markets for each are competitive
  - Sustainability and environment performance and the contribution of cotton to Australia
  - Regulatory burden – minimise impediments to grower businesses, collapse inefficiencies, harmonise inter-state regulatory environments
2. Research direction strategic priority

2.1 Rationale

Research, Development and Extension (RD&E) is fundamental to cotton’s sustainable competitive advantage, underpinning the continuous improvement and innovation essential to maintaining productivity, environmental sustainability and profitability of the industry.

Grower involvement in cotton’s RD&E strategy is essential for ensuring the delivery of valuable, applied RD&E.

Cotton Australia is the PIERD Act Representative Organisation responsible for working with CRDC on its RD&E strategy and investments on behalf of levy payers.

Cotton RD&E has been highly successful and is effective, but the RD&E landscape is evolving – the cost of research is increasing at the same time as organisations are under pressure to maintain funds and capability for an ever-expanding research agenda.

Cotton Australia is working with the RD&E sector to coordinate and continually improve cotton RD&E through the Cotton Innovation Network, which is implementing the national Cotton RD&E strategy.

Continued involvement is essential to maintain R&D and extract more value from it.

2.2 Purpose

Objective

• To ensure cotton RD&E is able to provide a continual pipeline of innovations to industry

Outcomes sought

• Cotton RD&E system resourced and capable
• Industry continues to create and adopt innovations based on RD&E

Key performance indicators

• Cotton Australia is trusted and respected by research stakeholders (membership, participation and satisfaction)
• Quality of research services (timeliness, accuracy, participation and satisfaction)
• Influence on CRDC
  − Adoption rate of formal and informal advice to CRDC
    ... Project advice
    ... Priority setting (strategic plan and annual operating plan)
  − Changes made as a result of advice to CRDC
• Cotton Innovation Network improves RD&E
2.3 Approach

Cotton Australia’s research direction approach has three key elements:

- **CRDC strategy and investment** – maximise available resources
- **Cotton Innovation Network** – improve RD&E coordination and impact
- **myBMP** – information to improve/demonstrate industry performance is up to date and available

**CRDC**

- Annual investment process
  - Convene advisory panels to provide advice to CRDC on annual project investments
  - Work with CRDC to improve the process to make the best use of voluntary panel members contributions
    - Ideas for the annual operating plan
      - Maximising meeting efficiency – meeting once for many purposes
      - Use of modern information platforms
      - Spending time on projects as well as the portfolio and the science
  - Strategy and science reviews
    - Strengthening the culture of monitoring, evaluation and reporting in cotton RD&E to increase impact and efficiency
      - Supporting systematic review of existing and potential RD&E of strategic programs, science disciplines and projects
    - Facilitating participation of industry, researchers and managers in reviews to deepen insight, build relationships and understanding and identify opportunities

**Cotton Innovation Network**

- Active support in the Cotton Innovation Network through:
  - Appointing and funding the Network chair
  - Participating in developing and implementing the annual work plan to improve coordination, reduce duplication and maximise resources

**myBMP**

- Work with CRDC and other RD&E organisations to foster a culture that contributes to a continually improving myBMP system
- Update myBMP modules with the latest information as it becomes available
3. Stewardship strategic priority

3.1 Rationale

Stewardship is essential to Australian cotton’s viability and on-going competitiveness through:

- Sustaining the integrity and life of cotton production (bio) technologies and practices
- Managing the impact of pests, weeds and resistance
- Minimising impacts on the environment (land, water and people)
- Maintaining cotton’s social licence to operate

It requires a collaborative approach between growers, government and cotton industry services sector with supporting science and systems (structures, regulation and procedures).

Cotton stewardship of biotechnology, biosecurity, work health and safety and the environment is mature but requires constant effort to maintain and improve capability and effectiveness.

3.2 Purpose

Objective

- Enhance cotton’s biosecurity, biotechnology, work health and safety and environmental stewardship

Outcomes sought

- Stewardship preparedness and responsiveness
- Social licence maintained and strengthened

KPIs

- Cotton Australia is trusted and respected by stewardship stakeholders (membership, participation and satisfaction)
- Quality of research stewardship services (timeliness, accuracy, participation and satisfaction)
- Cotton Australia facilitates processes to ensure preparedness and stakeholder commitment
- Stewardship policy processes listen to Cotton Australia’s advice
3.3 Approach

The three key elements of Cotton Australia’s approach to stewardship are:

- **Involvement with key stakeholders** – to build mutual understanding and commitment
- **Diligently working to establish appropriate frameworks** – to minimise and respond to risks
- **myBMP** – to support industry adoption and certification

**Involvement of a wide range of stakeholders**

- Maintain relationships with researchers, consultants, growers, government etc. to build understanding, commitment and ability to respond appropriately when required. The industry’s Development & Delivery joint venture is a key arrangement that focuses the industry’s organisations on this.
- Scanning to identify risks and emergent issues

**Vigilant yet practical – appropriate response to future risks**

- Facilitate and participate in industry and government stewardship committees to develop relationships and plans (know what to do)
- Facilitate development of capability to ensure the information, people and systems are available (being able to respond)
- Implement proactive/reactive responses to prevent/reduce stewardship risks (responding)

The industry Development and Delivery joint venture is a key industry mechanism that will facilitate the development of capability and support proactive/reactive responses.

**myBMP**

- Industry adoption support and advice. Support of the industry’s Development & Delivery joint venture as a key platform for promoting best practice.
- Certification service
4. Community and capacity strategic priority

4.1 Rationale

The cotton industry needs to be active and work with the communities where cotton is produced to:

• Involve them in the ongoing development of modern cotton (support and participation)

• Ensure growers and others are willing and able to lead the industry and its institutions

Cotton is a responsible industry which seeks to improve its performance. However, because this is not understood in the broader community, the cotton industry needs to:

• Champion itself by engaging with the community through open communication

• Be open about the strengths and weaknesses of its performance and potential improvements

• Provide supporting factual evidence, and

• Keep on demonstrating that the new, modern cotton industry has come a long way from ‘old cotton’.

4.2 Purpose

Objective

• To improve the capacity of cotton growers and industry participants

• People understand the modern cotton industry

Outcomes sought

• Capable cotton communities

• Create a better operating environment by improving industry’s reputation (value of cotton)

Key performance indicators

• Cotton Australia is trusted and respected by community and capacity stakeholders (membership, participation and satisfaction)

• Quality of community and capacity services (timeliness, accuracy, participation and satisfaction)

• People have capacity and interest in cotton and leadership roles

  – Recruitment of people into cotton and leadership roles

  – Participation in Cotton Conference and other Cotton Australia events for industry

• Wider community participating in Cotton Australia’s activities understand modern cotton industry
4.3 Approach

Community and capacity has three elements:

- **Demonstrating contribution and sustainability** – through independent review and education
- **Supporting the needs of members** – to strengthen industry groups (i.e. Cotton Grower Associations)
- **Capacity building** – to contribute to developing the skills of industry

**Demonstrating contribution and responsibility**

- Sustainability and environmental assessments and reporting
  - Work with CRDC to continue to evolve regular independent, evidence-based assessment of cotton industry’s sustainability and environmental performance and report outcomes to stakeholders and industry
  - Provide education and awareness services to interested audiences and targeted stakeholders

**Supporting needs of groups (members)**

- Supporting needs of individual Cotton Grower Associations through:
  - Regional managers working with and adapting their services to meet their needs
  - Creating and implementing joint plans to address each Cotton Grower Associations’ priorities locally
  - Support of the industry Development & Delivery joint venture to ensure improved responsiveness to support growers and meet industry needs
- Support Cotton Grower Associations to build their capacity through advice and support targeted to their priorities

**Capacity building**

- Facilitate regular leadership/skills development programs for growers and others in the industry
- Conduct awards to recognise outstanding effort and contributions to the cotton industry
- Organise events (e.g. Australian Cotton Conference) as opportunities for industry to learn, celebrate and strengthen relationships and camaraderie
The Best Management Practices (BMP) program is the Australian cotton industry’s commitment to best practice in cotton production.

It is a voluntary farm management system that provides self-assessment mechanisms, practical tools and resources allowing growers to both comply with regulation and to ensure that cotton is produced with best practice across a range of focus areas.

It is also the mechanism that combines science and agribusiness management and channels them to lift the industry’s performance standards, address threats and anticipate future challenges and opportunities.

BMP was launched in 1997 and redeveloped into the web-based program myBMP in 2010. Cotton Australia and its myBMP partner – the Cotton Research and Development Corporation (CRDC) – continue to develop the program to benefit the industry.

Over time, BMP has extended from its focus as an environmental management system into a tool comprising 11 modules that touch on many areas of production and farm business.

myBMP is one of the primary mechanisms for Cotton Australia to achieve its strategic goals.

It plugs into the four key priorities outlined in the Cotton Australia Strategic Plan 2013–2018, thus:

1. **Policy and Advocacy:** myBMP provides the evidence by which Cotton Australia influences key stakeholders, including government and the wider community, and communicates industry value

2. **Research:** myBMP transforms research into practical methods growers can use to lift performance and enhance sustainability on-farm. Feedback from growers loops back into the research process in order to promote continuous innovation and improvement

3. **Stewardship:** myBMP maintains cotton’s social licence to operate by providing the tools for growers to leave a smaller environmental footprint

4. **Community and Capacity:** important benchmarks from the myBMP program demonstrate cotton’s commitment to sustainable practices, which is communicated openly

myBMP continues to evolve into a more sophisticated tool, and as more growers participate it will serve to better the interests of cotton growers, the market, the industry and its organisations.
IMPLEMENTATION

The Cotton Australia 2013-2018 Strategic Plan will be implemented via annual Operational Plans, which outline key tactical priorities for the year ahead and are authorised separately by the Board.

Each annual Operational Plan will also address these key areas:
- Governance: monitoring and reporting on the Plan’s success
- Industry communications and engagement: extending the organisation’s reach and influence
- Human resource management: improving skills and effectiveness supported by efficient role and team structures
- Finance: systems for managing variable income, allocating, controlling and reporting expenditure
- Information technology: systems that deliver an efficiency dividend and effectively support Cotton Australia’s work.

STAKEHOLDERS

List of members, affiliates and key stakeholders that Cotton Australia works with:
• Members of Cotton Australia
  – Cotton Grower Associations
  – Ginners/processors
  – Cotton Seed Distributors Ltd
  – Crop Consultants Australia Inc
• Organisations that Cotton Australia is affiliated with:
  – Agricultural Biotechnology Council Australia
  – Australian Cotton Industry Council
  – Australian Cotton Shippers’ Association
  – ChemCert
  – Cotton Innovation Network
  – Cotton Research and Development Corporation
  – International Cotton Advisory Council
  – National Farmers’ Federation
  – National Irrigators’ Council
  – NSW Irrigators’ Council
  – Plant Health Australia
  – Primary Industries Education Foundation
  – Queensland Farmers’ Federation
  – Queensland Rural Industry Training Council
• Other key stakeholders:
  – Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority
  – CropLife Australia
  – CSIRO
  – Federal Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
  – NSW Department of Primary Industries
  – NSW Farmers
  – Office of the Gene Technology Regulator
  – QLD Department of Primary Industries
  – Other Australian, NSW and Queensland ministers, departments and agencies