



**Media Release**

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## **Pakistani, Indian growers join fashion identities in northern NSW cotton fields**

Leading Australian fashion and textile industry representatives toured Narrabri's cotton industry yesterday on Cotton Australia's annual farm tour. But in an added twist for this year's event, they were joined by a visiting group of cotton growers from Pakistan and India.

The Pakistani delegation have been touring farms, cotton gins, research facilities and cotton processing plants in northern NSW and southern Queensland.

"We have been proud to host the Pakistani and Indian growers on their tour so they can see Australia's advanced and sustainable cotton growing practices and cutting-edge production facilities," says Cotton Australia CEO, Adam Kay.

"Their tour was made possible via a partnership with the Australian Government and the Better Cotton Initiative (BCI). BCI is a global organisation working towards making Better Cotton a sustainable mainstream commodity."

"The partnership has paired our cotton industry's skills and resources with funding by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), allowing BCI to train more than 50,000 Pakistani farmers to adopt better crop production and labour practices while improving the social and economic benefits that flow back to them. DFAT funded the BCI Pakistan training partnership via the Australian Government's Business Partnerships Platform."

"It has been a wonderful experience to share our knowledge of advanced, responsible cotton production with our Pakistani visitors and understand their practices and the challenges they face. It has been a very beneficial tour and a fantastic learning experience for all involved."

The annual farm tour allows those outside the industry to see first-hand how cotton is grown and processed, and why Australian cotton is considered the most sustainable in the world.

Participants toured Auscott's Narrabri farm and gin before moving on to the Australian Cotton Research Institute (ACRI) in Narrabri, where they heard presentations by world-leading cotton scientists.

"For many fashion industry participants on the tour, it was their first opportunity to see how cotton fibre is grown and processed," Mr Kay says. "They really appreciated being able to see the source of the fibre that goes into the high-quality garments and homewares they ultimately produce."

“Attendees were able to stand in a cotton field, touch and feel the fibre for themselves, ride in a cotton picker, and talk directly to growers and industry, leaving with a much better knowledge of how our cotton is grown, harvested, processed, classed and shipped.”

“They also left with a sense of the Australian cotton industry’s commitment to sustainable production and social responsibility, particularly in the workforce area, as well as how research and development underpins the improvements in the industry over three decades.”

Some of the biggest names in fashion and the NGO attended the tour, including representatives from Country Road Group, Hanes, Jeanswest, RM Williams, Sportscraft and Baptist World Aid.

Mr Kay says some tour participants were unaware of the industry’s sustainability achievements, such as a reduction in insecticide use of more than 90% over the past 15 years, and a water efficiency increase of more than 40% since 2003.

“Global interest in sustainable, responsible cotton production continues to build, as the growth in Better Cotton demonstrates. BCI cotton now represents more than 20% of global cotton production. Events such as ours play a vital role in informing important stakeholders about how our industry operates and why they can trust our growers and industry,” he says.

“Cotton Australia works hard to bring the story of Australian cotton to the world. With more and more consumers demanding environmentally sustainable and ethically produced fibres, Australia’s cotton industry is well placed to meet that demand.”

**Note: images from the tour of Auscott’s Narrabri farm can be downloaded from here:**  
<https://www.dropbox.com/s/xymusxxipeqexbj/Cotton%20Australia%20farm%20tour%20April%202018.zip?dl=0>

*Cotton Australia is the peak representative body for Australia’s cotton growing industry.*

**Cotton Australia media contacts:**

Adam Kay  
CEO, Cotton Australia  
0437 695 222

Brooke Summers  
Project Lead – Cotton To Market  
0418 962 942

Chris Larsen  
Communications Manager, Cotton Australia  
0488 189 502  
ChrisL@cotton.org.au