



FINAL REPORT 2006/07

Part 1 - Summary Details

Please use your TAB key to complete Parts 1 & 2.

Cotton CRC Project Number: 5.1.02

Project Title: Water Wise Exhibition

Project Commencement Date: 01.07.05 **Project Completion Date:** 22.11.07

CRC Program: The Community

Part 2 – Contact Details

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Signature of Research Provider Representative: _____

Part 3 – Final Report Guide (due within 3 months on completion of project)

(The points below are to be used as a guideline when completing your final report.)

Background

The Australian Cotton Centre opened in July, 2002. The ACC is located in the centre of Australia's cotton growing regions on the Newell Highway within Narrabri. It has since won the 2003 NSW Tourism Award of Distinction for New Tourism Development, demonstrating its ability to deliver a professional, high quality attraction. It focuses on combining tourism and education to achieve a greater awareness of the cotton industry as it moves towards sustainability over time. The benefits of the ACC to the cotton industry throughout Australia are significant. The ACC is proving to be an important tool in educating the general public about the benefits and processes of Australia's cotton industry and providing awareness of the most commonly used fibre in the world – yet so little is known about it by most societies. The 'Water Wise' exhibit will join the stable of other Questacon designed exhibits within the Centre and enhance the visitor's knowledge and values of environmental issues.

Objectives

1. List the project objectives and the extent to which these have been achieved.

Obj No.	Objective	Milestone	Performance Indicator	Yr 1	Yr 2	Yr 3
1.	Tendering process for the construction of the water exhibit	November 05	Satisfactory quotation received from Big Bridge total cost \$88000	✓		
2.	Manufacturer selected	March 06	Contract signed	✓		
3.	Key water messages finalised in consultation with funding providers	May 06	The design and video script for each exhibit was presented and approved by sponsors	✓		
4.	Construction of exhibit	March 06 to November 06	Scripting and video images collected to match script and development and construction on the physical features of exhibit	✓	✓	
5.	New exhibit launched	November 06	The sponsor preview of the exhibits was held 22nd Nov 06 in conjunction with the ACC's members. And the		✓	

			exhibit was available to the public from the 23 rd Nov 06 onwards			
6.	Educate	November 06 onwards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey and Reports • Increased visitation to ACC and repeat visitation. • Improved perception of cotton production by general public 		✓	✓
7.	Measuring of public perception	November 06 onwards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of visitors book • Feedback • Surveys and reports • Repeat visitation 		✓	✓

Methods

2. Detail the methodology and justify the methodology used. Include any discoveries in methods that may benefit other related research.

N/A

Results

3. Detail and discuss the results for each objective including the statistical analysis of results.

Objectives 1 to 5, as per performance indicator detailed in Q1.

Objectives 6 & 7.

- Visitors to the Australian Cotton Centre still remain low due to seasonal trend of the tourism industry. It is traditional that November – mid March are the quietest months of the year and from Easter on the ACC receives 1000+ visitors per month from all demographics.

	Exhibit Area	Gift Shop	Total
December	540	443	983
January	551	244	795
February	249	156	405
March up to 26/3/07	483	186	669
			2852

The above graph illustrates visitation since the exhibits have been open to the public. Exhibit Area is the paid entries through the Exhibition therefore these are the people who have view both displays. Gift shop is the visitors who have not gone through to the paid exhibition so have only had exposure to the Catchment side of the exhibit. The ACC does not record the number of people who have simply enter the building to use the rest facilities as a result there would be a further 150+ people who have viewed the Catchment side of the exhibit.

Since the exhibits have been available to the public the Australian Cotton Centre has also experienced visitors expressing that they did not have the time to visit the Exhibition area and then after viewing the Catchment side of the exhibit, changing their minds and going through the exhibition as they believe it looks certainly worth their while.

Visitor comments have been extremely positive. Examples of comments in visitor's book:

30.11.06 – J Radcliff (Kerang) “Very enlightening about water usage”

13.12.06 – M. Symon (Sydney NSW)” Excellent, found the water display very interesting”

05.01.07 – Hayes family (Ganmain NSW) “Never knew how involved growing Cotton is”

17.01.07 – B&R Graham (Townsville QLD) “Very Good & Many questions answered”

04.03.07 – Kevin & Sue (Tamworth NSW) “Has given us a new respect for Cotton”

18.03.07 – L Myers (Ballarat VIC) “Wow, has addressed our concerns on water, thanks”

26.03.07 – G&E Dunlop (Brisbane QLD) “Excellent Display- One of the Best!”

Outcomes

4. Describe how the project's outputs will contribute to the planned outcomes identified in the project application. Describe the planned outcomes achieved to date.

Project Question(s)	Previous/ other relevant work	Expected Outputs	Expected Industry/Applied Outcomes	Achieved
1. Visitor: “The cotton industry uses too much water”	A wide range of studies and publications have been conducted in water use in the cotton industry and this current and creditable information was used. i.e. Water pack	Exhibit includes information on on-farm water use efficiency and high tech water management practices	Improved public knowledge and perception of innovative people in the cotton industry and community, creating a sustainable industry and viable regional communities	✓ refer visitor comments above
2. Visitor:	A wide range of	Exhibit includes	Improved	✓

“The cotton industry is taking all the water out of the river systems”	studies and publications have been conducted in water use in the cotton industry and this current and creditable information will be used.	comparative water use against other industries and everyday domestic use	public knowledge and perception of innovative people in the cotton industry and community, creating a sustainable industry and viable regional communities	refer visitor comments above
3. Visitor: “Cotton farmers pollute the rivers with chemicals”	A wide range of studies and publications have been conducted in chemical use and the river systems in the cotton industry and this current and creditable information will be used.	Exhibit includes recycling/tail water return	Improved public knowledge and perception of innovative people in the cotton industry and community, creating a sustainable industry and viable regional communities	✓ refer visitor comments above

5. Please describe any:-

a) Technical advances achieved (eg commercially significant developments, patents applied for or granted licenses, etc.)

N/A

b) Other information developed from research (eg discoveries in methodology, equipment design, etc.)

N/A

c) Required changes to the Intellectual Property register.

N/A

Conclusion

6. Provide an assessment of the likely impact of the results and conclusions of the research project for the cotton industry. What are the take home messages?

The interactive and educational “Water Wise” exhibits are delivering important key messages to the general public on water management, conservation and management at River Catchment level and by irrigated cotton farms.

Extension Opportunities

7. Detail a plan for the activities or other steps that may be taken:
 - (a) to further develop or to exploit the project technology. **N/A**
 - (b) for the future presentation and dissemination of the project outcomes. **N/A**
 - (c) for future research. **N/A**

8. A. List the publications arising from the research project and/or a publication plan.
(NB: Where possible, please provide a copy of any publication/s)
Nil

- B. Have you developed any online resources and what is the website address?
No

Part 4 – Final Report Executive Summary

Provide a one page Summary of your research that is not commercial in confidence, and that can be published on the World Wide Web. Explain the main outcomes of the research and provide contact details for more information. It is important that the Executive Summary highlights concisely the key outputs from the project and, when they are adopted, what this will mean to the cotton industry.

Situated in Narrabri, the heart of cotton country is the Australian Cotton Centre. Providing the educational front-line for the cotton industry, the centre takes visitors from young children to their grandparents on an educational and fun journey through the Australian cotton industry.

Since it first opened its doors in 2002, more than 55,000 people have visited the centre to learn about this world-leading industry.

Many Australians would be surprised to know that cotton was brought out on the first fleet and has been grown here commercially since the early 1960s. Narrabri is in the centre of this successful industry, which stretches from Menindee in the South of NSW to Emerald in the Central North of Queensland.

Cotton directly employs 10,000 people in these communities and contributes to the local and national economy.

The Australian cotton industry is the most water efficient in the world and produces yields three times the world average. It is these high standards that the Australian Cotton Centre highlights in its new “Water Wise” exhibits. With the prolonged drought, and increasing community and political interest in water, the Australian Cotton Centre addressed this issue with a new two exhibit display. Water was overwhelmingly the major issue concerning visitors that came to the Centre and the interactive “Water Wise” exhibits has helped to dispel some of the myths out there about water and the cotton industry.

For example, cotton is only grown where natural rainfall in the area is greater than 600mm a year. This rainfall makes up a large part of the crop's water requirements. The cotton industry will also spend \$17 million over the next three years on research projects to make it even more water-efficient.

The first exhibit promotes cotton industry research and explores issues such as water resources, conservation and environmental sustainability. It includes a miniature model of a river-catchment, complete with rain and running water informing visitors about water management and use at river-catchment level. The second exhibit displays an irrigated cotton field, demonstrating water use efficiency and technologies and techniques used by Australian farmers.

Most importantly, the "Water Wise" exhibits highlights the cotton industry's water saving initiatives, and explains the way water is allocated in the Murray-Darling system. For example, the exhibits detail the water cycle and its importance to regional communities and also that water is only allocated to cotton growers after environmental flows and domestic needs are met. The exhibits through education simultaneously promote and demonstrate how we can live sustainably.

The "Water Wise" exhibits join the other 9 interactive exhibits within the Centre to further enhance visitor's knowledge and values of Australia's Cotton Industry and in particular the environmental issues.

The centre is open everyday (except Christmas and Boxing Day) from 8.30am to 4.30pm. For further information call in or contact Sandy Young at the Australian Cotton Centre on +612 6792 6443 or sandy@australiancottoncentre.com.au