



# January, August & Final Reports

## REPORTS

### Part 1 - Summary Details

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

CRDC Project Number: **ACEC1C**

January Report:  Due 29-Jan-01  
August Report:  Due 03-Aug-01  
Final Report:  Due within 3 months of project completion

**Project Title:** Australian Cotton Exhibition Centre

**Project Commencement Date:** 1/7/1999    **Project Completion Date:** 30/6/2002

**Research Program:** Community

### Part 2 - Contact Details

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**Signature of Research Provider Representative:** \_\_\_\_\_

### ***Part 3 – Final Report Format***

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

#### **1. Outline the background to the project.**

The Australian Cotton Exhibition Centre (ACEC Ltd), trading as the Australian Cotton Centre, was officially opened by the Hon. John Anderson MP on July 19<sup>th</sup>, 2002. The Centre delivers key industry messages through interactive, informative and fun exhibits developed and constructed by Questacon, the National Science & Technology Centre. The Centre is open 7 days a week.

A voluntary Committee comprising of representatives from the cotton industry (Auscott, Namoi Cotton, LNCGA & CRDC), the Narrabri Shire Tourism Board and Rotary managed the project's development. The Board of ACEC Ltd now oversees the management of the Centre.

#### **2. List the project objectives and the extent to which these have been achieved.**

##### ***Objectives include:***

- Inform, educate and entertain the visitor on all facets of the Australian Cotton Industry
- Contribute to shaping community perceptions of the cotton industry
- Provide a 100% cotton theme attraction to attract Newell Highway motorists, educational groups and new visitors to the region.
- To be financially viable once operational, but not carried on for the profit or gain of its individual members
- Communicate with industry organisations such as the Cotton Research & Development Corporation to ensure the 'right' message is delivered.
- Communicate with tourism organisations such as NSW Tourism to ensure visitation numbers and promotional opportunities are capitalised upon.
- Develop educational programs and communicate with educational institutions to encourage visitation and participation.

##### ***Objectives achieved?***

- Stage 1 of the project has been completed, including 9 very interactive, informative, 100% cotton theme exhibits. This has involved tremendous in-kind support from cotton industry organisations, including the CRDC and ACRI to ensure information is simplified and technically correct.
- An educational kit has been developed and plays an important role with marketing and communicating to the educational sector.
- Visitation to the centre has been slow but picked up during the school holiday period to profitable levels. Little promotional activity occurred before the opening of the Centre, however, a marketing strategy has been developed and is currently being implemented. This will assist with visitation numbers and ultimately the financial viability of the Centre.

**3. How has your research addressed the Corporation's three outputs: Sustainability, profitability and international competitiveness, and/or people and community?**

- *"The Government's priorities for rural research and development (R&D) are closely aligned with the outcomes that the Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry portfolio is trying to achieve through its diverse programs. The essence of these programs is the need to promote and develop competitive, profitable and sustainable Australian agriculture, food, fisheries and forest industries which promote economic development and job creation, particularly in rural and regional Australia."*

The ACEC can contribute to CRDC achieving this government priority. The exhibits within the Centre promote the cotton industry; how competitive, how profitable and how sustainable it has become. The exhibits within the Centre also focus on the challenges and opportunities that the industry is facing.

- *"The government makes this (R&D) investment with the high expectation that the returns will benefit not only the industries directly, but also the wider community, particularly in rural and regional areas of Australia."*

The ACEC will directly benefit the rural & regional cotton growing regions of Australia.

- *On a micro level* - the Narrabri Shire will benefit significantly from the project. The increase in the number of visitors to the Shire will increase the dollars flowing into the region, promoting economic development and job creation.
- The New England, NorthWest region will also benefit from the increase in visitation numbers to the area. Surrounding Shires are keen to see the project proceed. The logic is that another attraction along the Newell Highway is another reason for travellers to use the Highway thus increasing the base level of potential dollars flowing into rural communities.
- *On a macro level* - the ACEC is a national Centre that represents the entire cotton industry. Key messages delivered in the Centre will take a whole of industry approach, benefiting the total industry.
- The Centre also has a commitment to continuous improvement. Surplus funds will be utilised to revamp exhibits to encourage repeat visitation. This longer-term strategy also provides the opportunity to place 'old' exhibits into other regional and rural communities particularly those in cotton growing areas.
- The Centre also presents the wider community with the opportunity to explore and achieve an informed view of the issues surrounding the cotton industry in a welcoming, open environment.
- The ACEC also provides the Corporation with the opportunity to promote its involvement within the industry and provide educational information on various industry issues.

## Part 4 – Final Report Plain English Summary

Provide a half to one page Plain English Summary of your research that is not commercial in confidence, and that can be published on the World Wide Web.

The Australian cotton industry is committed to developing and improving its competitiveness, profitability and sustainability that ultimately leads to economic development and job creation in rural and regional Australia. The Australian Cotton Exhibition Centre showcases this story and contributes to the achievement of this goal. ✕

The Australian Cotton Exhibition Centre (ACEC Ltd), trading as the Australian Cotton Centre, was officially opened by the Hon. John Anderson MP on July 19<sup>th</sup>, 2002. The Centre delivers key industry messages through interactive, informative and fun exhibits developed and constructed by Questacon, the National Science & Technology Centre. The Centre is open 7 days a week.

The Centre's mission is to become a valuable information and educational resource centre for the national cotton industry and simultaneously create regional economic development and job creation through tourism.

Its objective to promote the Australian Cotton industry using informative, educational and entertaining exhibits produced by the world renown Questacon will contribute significantly to the broader community having a greater understanding of the industry and its achievements.

Funding from the Cotton Research and Development was used for the "Wheel of Life" and "Better Breeding" exhibits. The "Wheel of Life" exhibit allows the visitor to investigate the *Helicoverpa* life cycle and corresponding farm management practices. The "Better Breeding" exhibit gets the visitor to experiment with crossing cotton plant varieties to produce a high yielding, high tolerance to insect pressure, thin leaved variety. The information provided in these 'hands-on' exhibits reflect the significant role that research has played since the commencement of the industry in the 1960s. These achievements need to be communicated to the general public and each exhibit achieves this, without technical jargon and utilizing novel delivery mechanisms. ✕ in italics

An educational pack has also been developed. It identifies links with the curriculum and includes student worksheets specifically developed to link the information found within the exhibits to the education curriculum needs. ✓

The federal government priorities include "the need to *promote and develop* competitive, profitable and sustainable Australian agriculture, food, fisheries and forest industries which promote economic development and job creation, particularly in rural and regional Australia." CRDC's contribution to the ACEC is an example of the Corporation addressing this priority. ✕

**4. Detail the methodology and justify the methodology used.**

Not applicable

**5. Detail results including the statistical analysis of results.**

Not applicable

**6. Discuss the results, and include an analysis of research outcomes compared with objectives.**

Not applicable

**7. Provide an assessment of the likely impact of the results and conclusions of the research project for the cotton industry. Where possible include a statement of the costs and potential benefits to the Australian cotton industry and future research needs.**

Stage1 of the centre cost \$2 million with funding being obtained from all levels of government, cotton industry and local business and community organisations. This excludes in-kind support provided by many individuals and organisations.

The Business Plan has forecasted the district will benefit by an additional \$1 million being injected into the local economy with an additional \$200,000 being spent within the centre each year. Two new full time and four casual positions have been created. Additional contract work for security, cleaning and exhibit maintenance has also been generated.

The benefits to the cotton industry will come from the general public's improved understanding of the industry. The strengthening of people's knowledge of, and favourable attitudes towards the cotton industry, as a result of visiting the centre will be surveyed and feedback given to cotton industry organisations such as the CRDC when requested.

**8. Describe the project technology (eg. commercially significant developments, patents applied for or granted licenses etc).**

Not applicable

**9. Provide a technical summary of any other information developed as part of the research project. Include discoveries in methodology, equipment design, etc.**

Not applicable

**10. Detail a plan for the activities or other steps that may be taken;**

(a) to further develop or to exploit the project technology.

(b) for the future presentation and dissemination of the project outcomes.

Not applicable

**11. List the publications arising from the research project.**

Not applicable

**12. Are changes to the Intellectual Property register required?**

Not applicable