



# FINAL REPORT

## *Part 1 - Summary Details*

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CRDC Project Number: CA1602

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**Project Title:** 2015-16 Grower RDE Advisory Panel  
Capacity Building

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**Project Commencement Date:** 1/7/2015

**Project Completion Date:** 30/6/2016

## *Part 2 – Contact Details*

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## *Part 3 – Final Report*

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### *Background*

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

The Cotton Australia grower RD&E Advisory Panels function in providing practical advice on research, development and extension (RD&E) needs and priorities within the industry. This advice forms important guidance to CRDC for strategic R&D planning, annual

operation planning, development of Expressions of Interest and resultant CRDC decisions as to project investments.

Cotton Australia facilitates 4 advisory panels that are aligned with the CRDC strategic plan priorities. The panels consist of up to 40 grower, consultant or ginning Member Representatives from every cotton growing region in Australia.

The Transgenic and Insect Management Strategies Committee (TIMS) functions as a cotton industry stewardship group, with broad representation from growers, research organisations, crop consultants and members of the pulse and grains industries. The agricultural chemical, biotechnology and seed companies that provide crop protection tools to Australian cotton growers approach the TIMS committee for advice on issues associated with developing or amending resistance management plans for new or existing technologies. Cotton Australia is represented by 6 grower representatives, the TIMS Committee Chair, the Chairs of the three technical panels and the Executive Officer.

The Cotton Industry Biosecurity Group (IBG) serves to ensure that the cotton industry's responsibilities under the Emergency Plant Pest Response Deed (EPPRD) are met. It is anticipated that the IBG will constitute 1 staff and up to 3 grower representatives of Cotton Australia as well as representatives from CRDC, Crop Consultants Australia, CSIRO, NSW DPI, QDAF and Plant Health Australia.

### *Objectives*

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

The project facilitates opportunities for the development of leadership skills and stakeholder capacity for providing advice on RD&E issues, including technology stewardship and biosecurity.

The project provides for the travel, meeting and training expenses reasonably incurred by Cotton Australia in connection with the development of its grower RD&E Advisory Panel, TIMS and IBG Representatives.

For this project, development opportunities were primarily associated with participation in the Cotton Collective, The Australian Cotton Scientists Research Conference and other discipline-specific conferences including CRDC discipline reviews.

Member Representatives who participated in these forums generally developed a better understanding of the key inter- and intra- industry RDE priorities and as such, were better able to contribute to strategic discussions around these priorities.

### *Methods*

#### **3. Detail the methodology and justify the methodology used. Include any discoveries in methods that may benefit other related projects.**

## Cotton Collective

Travel and accommodation expenses were provided for 25 Member Representatives to attend the 2015 Cotton Collective, 5-6 August 2015, Narrabri. RD&E Advisory Panel members were required to chair and participate in forums with guest speakers on relevant cotton industry RD&E matters. The conference program was designed to improve the knowledge and understanding of Member Representatives across several research priority areas. This was delivered through presentations and discussions in the following areas and associated with the following Panels;

- Water policy, big data, soil compaction and nutrition (Farmers Panel)
- Workforce development and skills demand (People Panel)
- Promotion of Australian cotton (Customers Panel)
- Responsible resource management, herbicide resistance and Bollgard® 3 (Industry Panel)

## Conferences

Travel, accommodation and registration expenses were covered for Member Representatives and TIMS representatives attended presentations and discussions at a variety of industry-wide and discipline-specific conferences and workshops. This delivered improved knowledge and understanding for the following participants in their respective areas of interest/responsibility. A list of participants and conferences attended is as follows;

Workshop	Date	Funding recipient	Panel	Area of interest
Cotton Collective, Narrabri	5-6 Aug 2015	Various	Various	Various
Association of Australian Cotton Scientists Conference, Toowoomba	8-10 Sep 2015	John Cameron	TIMS HTC Tech Panel Chair	Herbicide resistance
		Matt McVeigh	Farm	Fibre quality
		Nev Walton	Industry, TIMS Bt Tech Panel Chair	Bt stewardship, biosecurity
		Nigel Corish	Farm, Customers	Nutrition
		Rebecca Lindert	Customers	Fibre quality
Cotton Industry Nitrogen Tour	01 Feb 2016	Peter Tuohey	Farmers, People	Resource use efficiency
Research & Innovation Network for Precision Agriculture, Melbourne	01 Apr 2016	Nick Gillingham	Farm	Precision agriculture
FUSCOM, Toowoomba	12-13 Apr 2016	Sean Boland	Farm	Crop protection (disease)
Primary Industries Education Foundation Australia, Canberra	03 May 2016	Kate O'Callaghan	Customers, People	Education
Responsible Landscape Management R&D Review, Brisbane	5-6 May 2016	Luke Stower	Farmers, Industry	Water resources
		Ross Burnett	Industry	Reef stewardship

## *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.**

The project outcomes delivered capacity for informed stakeholder advice regarding cotton industry RD&E priorities, to underpin the industry's future profitability, sustainability and competitiveness through the following outputs;

- Identification of training and development opportunities for Member Representatives;
- Development and Implementation of information sharing sessions and engaged discussions around strategic industry RD&E priorities and specific research projects (delivered through Cotton Collective, 2015);
- Provision of financial support to allow Member Representatives to attend and actively engage in discipline-based CRDC workshops, to identify key strategic RD&E priorities;
- Provision of financial support to encourage Member Representatives to engage in meaningful discussions around cross-industry strategic R&E priorities;
- Provision of forums for Member Representatives to share learnings from attendance at capacity building conferences and workshops, including provisions to share these learnings with all CGAs;
- Provision of an annual written report on the performance of the project in meeting the project objectives.

### **5. Please report on any:-**

- a) Feedback forms used and what the results were
- b) The highlights for participants or key learnings achieved
- c) The number of people participating and any comments on level of participation

### **Cotton Collective**

Feedback forms collected at the Cotton Collective indicated that 100% participants rated the value of the workshop as 'high' or above. Additionally, 100% of survey participants indicated they would go away from the Collective with new information that they intended to pass on to their respective CGAs, suggesting broader industry benefit from participation in these conferences.

The key industry challenges identified by survey participants include;

- Competitiveness: branding and man-made fibres;
- Herbicide resistance;
- Cost of production & productivity;
- Nitrogen management;
- Water; and
- Soil compaction.

Suggestions for improvements included;

- Removal of concurrent sessions to broaden exposure and allow participation in discussions for the Farmers, Industry, Customers and People Panels.
- Inclusion of discussions around the following RDE priorities
  - Farmers Panel: future farms including robotics, seed quality, renewable energy, sucking insect pests
  - Industry Panel: water, glyphosate resistance
  - Customers Panel: man-made fibres
  - People Panel: soft skills, media training/social media, governance, mentoring

## Conferences

Member Representatives attending capacity building conferences were asked to provide feedback in the form of an oral report to the Cotton Australia General Meetings.

Specific information regarding content for these conferences was presented to the general assembly, in anticipation that Member Representatives would share these learnings with all CGA members.

All participants saw value in their participation through increased knowledge and understanding of key research gaps, as well as contribution to strategic discussions for RDE.

## Budget

### **6. Describe how the project's budget was spent in comparison with the application budget. Outline any changes and provide justification.**

The project budget was spent in accordance with the application budget. No changes are required.

## Conclusion

### **7. 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 project facilitated opportunities for the development of stakeholder capacity for providing advice on cotton RD&E issues.

Member Representatives who participated in capacity building forums generally developed a better understanding of the key industry RD&E priorities and as such, were better able to contribute to strategic discussions around these priorities.

Participation in broader industry conferences also enabled Member Representatives to participate in cross-industry discussions around strategic RD&E issues – thus increasing awareness of the cotton industry RD&E priorities and allowing transfer of knowledge from other agricultural industries, back to CGA Members.