



# FINAL REPORT

## *Part 1 - Summary Details*

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

**CRDC Project Number:** CA1802

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## **Project Title: 2017-18 Grower RDE Advisory Panels Capacity Building**

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**Project Commencement Date:** 1/07/2017 **Project Completion Date:** 30/06/2018

## *Part 2 – Contact Details*

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## *Part 3 – Final Report*

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### *Background*

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

Cotton Australia engages cotton growers, consultants, and representatives of industry bodies to provide strategic advice regarding CRDC investments and industry stewardship programs.

The Cotton Australia Member Representatives provide practical advice on research, development and extension (RDE) needs, opportunities, and priorities. This advice is important guidance to CRDC in its formation of five-year Strategic R&D Plans, Annual Operational Plans, Expressions of Interest for RD&E and resultant CRDC decisions as to project investments.

Cotton Australia facilitates informal advisory panels that are aligned with the CRDC strategic plan priorities. The panels consist of up to 40 grower, consultant and ginners members from every cotton growing region.

The TIMS Committee is facilitated by Cotton Australia and the TIMS Technical Panels are facilitated by CRDC. 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 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 Biosecurity Reference Group (Cotton BRG) has traditionally met annually to ensure that the cotton industry's responsibilities under the Emergency Plant Pest Response (EPPR) Deed are met. Development of an implementation plan through recent revision of the Industry Biosecurity Plan has led to a need to formalise this group to address key biosecurity needs of the industry. The IBG includes 1 grower and 1 staff representative of Cotton Australia as well as representatives from CRDC, CottonInfo, CSIRO, NSW DPI, QDAF, and a number of Australian Universities.

The Sustainability Working Group (SWG) manages the industry's ongoing commitment to becoming the producer and supplier of the most environmentally and socially responsible cotton in the world. The SWG maintains oversight to ensure communication and coordination across a range of related cotton industry sustainability activities. The SWG is represented by 2 staff representatives each from CRDC and Cotton Australia, a cotton grower, ACSA, and representatives of the myBMP, Cotton To Market programs.

### *Objectives*

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

The project facilitated opportunities for the development of stakeholder capacity for providing advice on RD&E issues, including technology stewardship.

The project provided for the travel, meeting and training expenses reasonably incurred by Cotton Australia in connection with the development of its grower RD&E Advisory Panel members, Biosecurity Reference Group, Sustainability Working Group, and grower TIMS Committee members. This project also provided to meet reasonable travel costs associated with meeting attendance for growers and consultants considered to be subject-matter experts but not necessarily aligned with a specific industry Committee.

For this project, development opportunities were primarily associated with participation meetings, conferences, workshops, and research reviews associated with herbicides and weed management, pathology, resistance management, and biosecurity.

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.**

Travel, accommodation and registration expenses were covered for grower 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. Grower and consultant participation at these meetings also provided guidance regarding the practicality and relevance of strategic research priorities for the industry. A list of participants and conferences attended is as follows;

Workshop	Representatives
CRDC pathology review, 16 May 2018, Sydney	Andrew Watson, Brendon Warnock, Sam Simons
CRDC weeds review, 22 May 2018, Toowoomba	John Cameron, Ben Dawson
Cotton Biosecurity Group review, 17 May, Sydney	David Walton
Sustainability strategy review, 26 February, Brisbane and 9 May 2018, Sydney	Ross Burnett
Biosecurity scenario, 12 July 2017, Brisbane	Bernie Bierhoff, William Back, Emma Ayliffe, Neek Morowitz, David Walton
Cotton Collective, 26-27 July, Griffith	The majority of Member Representatives, listed at <a href="http://cottonaustralia.com.au/about/our-people/members">http://cottonaustralia.com.au/about/our-people/members</a>

### *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;
- 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

Feedback regarding grower and participation for these workshops and conferences was generally positive:

- Improved engagement between the growing/consulting and research communities
- Improved grower/consultant understanding of the research area, and improved understanding of industry needs and processes.
- Improved understanding by the research & policy community regarding the strategic research needs of the growing & consulting community.
- Improved ability of CRDC to set & implement relevant strategic research priorities.

### ***Budget***

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

The project's budget was spent in line with the application budget. No changes were 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 strategic 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 CGAs and other Cotton Australia Members.