



FINAL REPORT 2013/2014

Part 1 - Summary Details

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

CRDC Project Number: CGA Macquarie

Project Title: Celebrating the Season

Project Commencement Date: 23/09/2013 **Project Completion Date:** 31/12/2013

Part 2 – Contact Details

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Part 3 – Final Report

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

Background

1. Outline the background to the project.

In the past 12 months Macquarie CGA, in conjunction with our RDO and Regional CA manager, has held a number of workshops, information days and events. Attendance has been increasing steadily at these events. With a large amount of change occurring in the valley due to the inflow of Water Efficiency Project funding money, there is a great sense of challenge and excitement. However there are very few social events where the majority of our membership can meet up with each other.

Our annual Awards Dinner is one such event. MCGA attempts to make this event rewarding, cost effective and worthwhile for growers.

Objectives

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

This project seeks to create a forum which brings together all levels of the cotton industry in the Macquarie Valley and from across all geographical areas of the valley, giving a

platform for an exchange of information and support and the opportunity to connect with and create new partnerships.

Result: A large number of the 165 attendees at the Awards Dinner were young growers who have returned to family farms in the valley. They were able to mix with older growers and the wide range of industry, banking and advisory people who also attended.

The night was very congenial with everyone mixing well and a lot of information being shared. The presentation of the Chesterfield Crop of the Year was detailed and informative and encouraged growers to think about entering next year.

Funding from CRDC helps to keep the event operating at a level that makes it prestigious and valued by our members.

Result: Feedback indicates that the prestigious standard of the Awards Dinner has created an atmosphere of positiveness and importance, and the event is creating its own energy.

The committee feels it is important for the cohesiveness of our cotton grower community to gather as many growers together as possible for this event. The energy created by the interactions on the night creates a very positive outlook for the coming season.

Result: The physical distance that the Macquarie Valley encompasses is very large, and events are usually attended by those in the vicinity of the event, often leading to workshops or field days being replicated in different towns. The Awards Dinner brings people together from the entire valley and creates a much stronger sense of unity in the valley.

Methods

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

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 Awards Dinner is an important event in the valley as it provides the only social event that the majority of growers and industry people meet to exchange ideas, celebrate achievements and celebrate the cotton industry. MCGA makes a huge effort to make this event attractive as it recognises that it is very easy for growers to stay isolated and not attend social functions. Socialising is a necessary activity to help alleviate the symptoms of depression and loneliness that tends to be endemic in rural areas.

The Economic Benefits will be: Financial assistance with the dinner means direct costs to the growers can be kept lower, and also helps keep membership costs to an attractive and affordable amount. Provision of a free bus eliminates the concerns of fatigue and drink driving and encourages more people to attend.

The Environmental Benefits will be: The exchange of information that takes place at events such as the awards dinner will have a long term environmental benefit, as there have been a number of growers who have made improvements on their water efficiency and the dinner gives a forum to share this knowledge.

The Social Benefits will be: bonding the growers who farm across three different areas, up to 150 kms apart. There are very few events that bring the whole membership together. It also is an important chance to relax and forget responsibilities and worries for a short time.

Result: All of these outcomes were met.

5. Please report on any:-

a) Feedback forms used and what the results were
None

b) The highlights for participants or key learnings achieved
Highlights included being involved in a prestigious event that celebrated the industry that participants were involved in; knowledge sharing and a heightened optimism and sense of worth in the participants.

c) The number of people participating and any comments on level of participation
165 people attended the event and the number of young growers attending was noteworthy. Also industry connected people from other areas attended and were able to interact with the local growers. This year we had a major 'Naming Rights' sponsor for the first time, which indicates the level of value now linked to the Awards Night.

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 as was requested in the application. Bus hire costed out at \$1620, which was slightly higher than budgeted for, but was due to a larger bus being required. Two buses ran, one from Warren and one from Trangie and both picked up at properties along the way.

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 take home message was that MCGA is a fantastic association to be part of, and that aiming high and achieving good farming outcomes gets recognised and celebrated. The evening also assisted in enhancing the cohesiveness of the growers, despite the distances involved. Attendees were enthused and entertained by the night and the end result was a general air of optimism.

Extension Opportunities

8. Detail a plan for the activities or other steps that may be taken:

(a) To tell other CGAs/growers/regions about your project.

People attended from other regions and were very positive about the format of our evening and the achievements of our growers.

(b) To keep in touch with participants.

All participants are on our emailing list and are kept up to date with workshops, information and other activities as they occur.

(c) For future projects.

The success of the night has created interest in other events MCGA are planning and will result in increasing attendance at other events, such as bus tours and workshops, that are planned.