



Australian Government

Cotton Research and
Development Corporation

1502

FINAL REPORT 2013/2014

Part 1 - Summary Details

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

CRDC Project Number: CGA1502

Project Title: Building the Capacity of Teachers Via the
Field to Fabric Course

Project Commencement Date: 22.09.2014 **Project Completion Date:** 24.09.2014

Part 2 – Contact Details

Administrator: Bronwyn Christensen
Organisation: Dawson Valley Cotton Growers Association
Postal Address: P O Box 18, Theodore Q 4719
Ph: 0488 931691 **Fax:** **E-mail:** bronwync@cotton.org.au

Part 3 – Final Report

Background

1. Outline the background to the project.

- The Dawson Valley Cotton Growers Association is committed to increasing positive awareness of the cotton industry within our District's schools. In 2013 and with the assistance of CRDC and Cotton Australia, the DVCGA provided the opportunity for three teachers (Theodore State School, Moura State High School and Biloela State High School) to attend the Field to Fabric workshop resulting in all three teachers incorporating cotton studies in some form in their classroom. In May this year, Cotton Australia and the Dawson Valley Cotton Growers hosted a very successful Dawson Valley Teach the Teacher event incorporating a visit to a cotton farm during picking and the Queensland Cotton ginnery for teachers and staff of the Theodore State School and Moura State and State High Schools. This was very well supported and well regarded by all schools involved and particularly by staff who have had no or limited exposure to the agricultural industries.
- The Association hoped the immersion of two teachers from Theodore State School would greatly expedite the strengthening of linkages between the local industry and the school as well as enhancing the opportunities for cotton studies to be incorporated into the local curriculum.

Objectives

2. List the project objectives (from the application) and the extent to which these have been achieved.
 1. Capitalising on interest by teachers to incorporate the cotton industry as part of their teaching resources following a highly successful Teach the Teacher event for Moura and Theodore teachers.
 - Two teachers from Theodore State School were eager to increase their knowledge of the industry and committed the travel and attendance time out of their own school holidays to attend.
 2. Overcoming Professional Development limitations for local schools by the funding of workshop attendance and travel for two teachers to attend the Field to Fabric Workshop in Melbourne in August 2014.
 - Given the tightening of all state and federal funding, schools no longer have the ability to procure non-curriculum specific professional development for teachers. The funding of the attendance by the teachers greatly enhanced the professional development of the attending teachers and the other staff within the school through interaction and presentations by the attending teachers to the other staff.
 3. Upskilling of key educators within our local schools.
 - Both attending teachers report a greatly increased awareness of the cotton industry, an interest that commenced at the Teach the Teacher event earlier this year. In addition, they have already been collaborating with other staff, including a staff member who attended the Field to Fabric workshop last year, to capitalize on their own professional development and increase the learning of the industry by their students.
 - The teachers highlighted this upskilling with a brief overview (attached) and a presentation to the Dawson Valley Cotton Growers Association at their October meeting.
 4. Providing a pathway for additional cotton education initiatives into local schools through the education and empowerment of key staff
 - The teachers have already been collaborating with other staff, including a staff member who attended the Field to Fabric workshop last year, to capitalize on their own professional development and increase the learning of the industry by their students through both individual class initiatives and whole of school initiatives.

Methods

5. Detail the methodology and justify the methodology used. Include any discoveries in methods that may benefit other related projects.
 - The Field to Fabric workshop is the most comprehensive overview available, delivered in a timely fashion. Given the time restraints for the teachers, either during school time (replacement teacher cost delineated) or during vacation time, a short, succinct but information loaded course was required. Field to Fabric fit the bill!

Outcomes

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

- Collaboration between attendees and other staff members, including Principal to determine most effective inclusion of learnings within the school curriculum.
- Empowerment by the School Principal of the teachers involved in allowing them to develop and drive these initiatives.
- Attendance at a Dawson Valley Cotton Growers Association meeting and the opportunity to meet and mix with the community's cotton growers directly (especially given that the majority of growers do not have children at the school).

7. 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
- Two teachers attended the Field to Fabric workshop. Reports attached.

Budget

8. 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 correct with total expenditure in travel and accommodation met by Dawson Valley Cotton Grower's Association and Cotton Australia and the cost of Field to Fabric Course met by this Grass Roots Grants funding.
- No unforeseen expenditure.
- One alteration was the inclusion of two teachers from one school given that the other school offered the opportunity (Moura State High School) was not able to provide a teacher willing to attend during school holiday time.

9. Conclusion

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 will result in increased interaction between the local cotton industry and the Theodore State School.
- The project will ultimately result in the inclusion of cotton related subjects within the curriculum of initially, Prep and Year One and Year Seven. In addition, it is envisaged that there will be greater whole of school support for local initiatives and hopefully initiatives such as Art4Agriculture with three (including last year's attendee) on-site ambassadors.
- If and when the attending teachers transfer to other schools, it is envisaged that they will remain well informed and passionate advocates for the cotton industry.

Extension Opportunities

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

- (a) To tell other CGAs/growers/regions about your project.
 - I have been and will continue to report on this initiative with the other Cotton Australia Regional Manager's at our update opportunities – teleconferences and meetings.
- (b) To keep in touch with participants.
 - With three children at the local school and my husband as P&C President, I am committed to our local school for the foreseeable future! It is planned to maintain the exposure of the school to the local cotton industry with further activities next school year such as a Teach the Teacher in a different format, school visits by growers and an increase in farm site visits.
 - In addition, the school's agricultural block is nearing completion which will provide additional opportunities for the lower secondary students to become involved in agriculture in general and cotton specifically.
- (c) For future projects.
 - As above.

Teacher Reports

Lauren Williams – Prep, Theodore State School

The experience I received from the Field to Fabric Conference has substantially enlightened my knowledge of the cotton industry. Growing up in urban Brisbane my knowledge of cotton was very limited when first arriving in Theodore. The opportunity to learn more about an industry so engrained in Theodore's community and population has been invaluable personally and professionally.

Throughout the three day course we learnt about the intricate processes cotton takes from agronomy to the production of fabric and the impact it has on the Australian economy. The conference offered a variety of learning contexts as we had guest speakers who were deeply involved in the various stages of cotton development. Factory tours were a highlight as we got to see some processes that we would usually not have the opportunity to see, as all combing, spinning and twisting processes are conducted in overseas factories. I was amazed at the production line cotton has from the field to the clothes we currently wear. I am grateful to have been offered this amazing opportunity to view how the cotton industry functions and am excited to integrate this knowledge into the school curriculum.

The Field to Fabric Conference was able to provide us with lots of information in the development of cotton. As we went to the conference with a unique teaching perspective, we were able to take knowledge of various processes and see how we can incorporate it into the curriculum to make rich and inclusive learning experiences for the students of Theodore. There are many aspects to incorporate cotton into specifically the Science curriculum throughout each year level. We endeavour to collate the knowledge we have gained from the conference and create an outline so teachers can easily integrate it into their curriculum.

Thank you for the wonderful and enlightening experience of the Field to Fabric Conference. As a teacher I am always looking for ways to make real world links into the curriculum to create relevant learning experiences for all students. As the cotton industry is a large

industry in Theodore it seems only logical to incorporate this into the classroom to take advantage of community knowledge and enhance community pride in cotton and education.

Renee Laing – Year 1, Theodore State School

Teaching in a community where the cotton industry is prominent I feel it is essential for teachers to be linking the local industry with the curriculum content being delivered in the classroom. Having moved from the Sunshine Coast earlier this year the cotton industry was somewhat foreign to me. Attending the Field to Fabric Training Course has therefore allowed me to develop an understanding and knowledge of the cotton industry and it's processes.

It was enlightening to see the process from field to fabric in its entirety and develop a true understanding of the cotton industry. Having attended a tour of the Moura Gin earlier in the year, I particularly enjoyed seeing the processes beyond the gin – including the spinning and knitting and weaving.

The presenters of the course were fantastic and a wealth of knowledge and the experience has inspired me to explore the ways in which this real world knowledge can be connected with the Australian curriculum and delivered, through engaging learning experiences, to students in Central Queensland.

Renee Laing – Year One Teacher at Theodore State School.