



# CGA FINAL REPORT 2015/16

## ***Part 1 - Summary Details***

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

**CRDC Project Number:** CGA1604

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**Project Title:** Local Weather Station Access

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**Project Commencement Date:** 31 October 2015

**Project Completion Date:** 30 September 2016

## ***Part 2 – Contact Details***

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## ***Part 3 – Final Report***

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

### ***Background***

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

Cotton growers in the Dawson Valley have previously had no access to localised, correct weather forecasting and status and rely on information relayed from weather stations located at Biloela which is 116 km away. Local growers wished to increase their access to reliable weather information to enable them to determine predicted temperature, rainfall events and wind direction and speed thus enabling them to make better farm and crop management decisions.

The purchase and installation of three Oz Forecast Next Gen Compact Weather Stations with solar radiation kits has enabled growers to access this information easily on their mobile phones and has the capacity for Station extension to include soil temperature.

### *Objectives*

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

- (a) Purchase of 3 Oz Forecast Next Gen Compact Weather stations and installation by November 2015.

Three growers have purchased and installed a weather station on their property. These weather stations have been located to give the most effective coverage for maximum plantings. The stations are located at 'Harcourt' Baralaba; 'Glendale' Moura'; and "Kooroowatha" Gibber Gunyah, Theodore.

- (b) Provide workshop for local growers to ensure maximum access and interpretation of the data provided by the station.

Originally it was thought that the growers would need a workshop to enable full utilization of the weather stations. The setup of the stations and subsequent 'teaking' of the ability to access the information via smartphone by all local growers (and interested locals) has been able to be completed via phone and email communications. All coordinates and login details for all three stations has been communicated to all growers within the areas.

### *Methods*

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

There has been an ongoing need for increased access to local and timely weather information for all growers located within the Dawson Valley. Once the Grass Roots Grant application had been approved, the location of the three weather stations to provide the greatest benefit to the Valley was discussed at length at a DVCGA General meeting. It was determined that locations at Baralaba, Moura and Gibber Gunyah were most appropriate for these initial stations.

It is expected that once the effectiveness of these particular stations are known, the DVCGA will undertake activities to purchase a fourth station to assist growers located in the channel irrigation area North East of the Theodore township.

### *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.**

Growers in the areas where the stations are located have reported increased confidence in their crop management decisions due to the local, timely and reliable data provided by the weather stations.

Whilst spray drift situations have not been a concern in the Dawson Valley in recent years, the stations will assist to ensure this situation continues and continue to instil confidence in the local community in the environmental responsibility of the local cotton industry.

A complementary benefit has been the addition of a soil temperature probe, to be provided by CSD, to the station located at 'Glendale' to further improve grower access to crop management tools.

**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

A highlight of this Grass Roots Grant is the longevity of the assistance provided. The benefits to the growers and the local cotton industry commenced at station installation and will continue throughout the lifespan of the station, expected to be more than ten years. All members of the DVCGA were involved in the project and whilst the location of the stations were limited to three entities, one of the stations will benefit an additional grower and all will provide valuable information to the DVCGA as a whole on weather patterns across our valley. All DVCGA members display a high level of interest in the data provided by the most appropriate station to their growing operation.

**Budget**

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

Incurred expenditure was as planned in the original submission.

**Please list expenditure incurred. (Double click inside the table to enter the data)**

Date	Description	Amount excl GST	GST	Total
Feb - May 2016	Consultation with growers and research and sourcing of most appropriate weather station for area and requirements by Damien Erbacher - in-kind support			0
	Purchase of OzForecast Next Gen Compact Weather Station by M and D Austin "Harcourt" Baralaba			3,333.00
	Purchase of OzForecast Next Gen Compact Weather Station by Greg Hutchinson "Glendale", Moura			3,333.00
	Purchase of OzForecast Next Gen Compact Weather Station by Greg and Chris Austin "Kooroowatha", Gibber Gunyah, Theodore			3,333.00
				0.00
			<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>9,999.00</b>

## *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 from the purchase of the weather stations is clear – information is king!! The more information, data and accurate readings that a grower can access when making his or her cotton management decisions the better. Undertaking initiatives to access this data demonstrates best management practice to the remainder of the industry, to surrounding agricultural industries and to the surrounding community and assists to inspire confidence in the industry as a long term, sustainable and environmentally sound component of the Dawson Valley.

## *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.
  - (b) To keep in touch with participants.
  - (c) For future projects.

Bron Christensen will provide details of the Grassroots Grant to purchase the weather stations to the Cotton Australia Regional Managers located in other cotton growing areas to potentially inspire other areas that do not already have access to quality weather data to undertake a similar project.

As we are a small CGA, growers are in almost weekly if not daily contact with each other and industry representatives so information sharing in an informal environment is ongoing.

CSD has already identified that the weather stations located on properties that have or will undertake seed trials are a valuable tool and have supplemented this tool with a soil probe to assist research reporting as well as crop management.