



# Final Report

Capacity &amp; Community | Cotton Research &amp; Development Corporation

## FINAL REPORT 2006

### *Part 1 - Summary Details*

---

CRDC Project Number: **CRDC246** OR Cotton CRC Project Number:

**Project Title:** Wincott Incorporated - Women's Industry Network  
Cotton

---

**Project Commencement Date:**

**Project Completion Date:**

**CRDC Program:** Capacity & Community **OR CRC Program:** - Please Select One -

### *Part 2 – Contact Details*

---

**Administrator:** Kate Schwager

**Organisation:** Wincott Incorporated - Women's Industry Network Cotton

**Postal Address:** "Krubu" 54 Warrana Lane Wee Waa NSW 2388

**Ph: 02 67967243** **Fax:** 02 67967243 **E-mail:** bkschwager@bigpond.com

---

**Principal Researcher:** Helen Dugdale, Chair

**Organisation:** Wincott

**Postal Address:**

**Ph:** 0267924088 **Fax:** **E-mail:** Helen.dugdale@crdc.com.au

---

**Supervisor:** (Name & position of senior scientist overseeing the project).

**Organisation:**

**Postal Address:**

**Ph:** **Fax:** **E-mail:**

---

**Signature of Research Provider Representative:** \_\_\_\_\_



## ***Part 3 – Final Report Guide (due 31 October 2006)***

---

### ***Background***

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

Wincott is a network for all women involved both directly and indirectly in the Australian cotton industry, offering an alternative opportunity for them to increase their knowledge and develop their skills. The network caters to women of all levels of skills and confidence, who wish to learn more about cotton growing and the cotton industry through to women who may wish to undertake a broader role within the industry or in the wider agricultural sector. Wincott activities provide long term benefits and foster mainstream participation. The network is cost effective and uses existing industry structures and a wide range of resources to achieve its aims and objectives.

**Establishment & Sponsorship:** Funding from the Cotton Research and Development Corporation established the network and provided co-ordination for the development and research of relevant services.

Wincott's focus is on providing information and linkages sourced from industry, government, community and from the members themselves. It can be achieved in a coordinated manner through meetings, newsletters, field days, and training seminars.

Wincott provides:

- A support network for Women in the cotton industry
- Communication between women in the industry and within the industry as a whole
- Increased awareness of industry issues
- An avenue for constructive feedback to both industry and government
- A resource network for the cotton industry
- Workshops and field days
- Support for women new to industry and supplies an information starter kit
- An updated database of members
- A quarterly newsletter
- Support for local area activities
- Information about all industry activities
- Coverage in all cotton growing regions

### ***Objectives***

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

##### **Objectives Year 1:**

1. Maintenance of Database of women involved in the network
- 1b. Update newssheets
2. Newsletters
3. Organise 1 -2 meetings per Year.
4. Facilitate regional workshops liaising with regional contacts
5. Liaise with Research, Government, Community and Industry bodies to facilitate information transfer in an appropriate format.
6. Promote communication between women in the industry (Website forum, meetings)
7. Support women new to the cotton industry
8. Update the "Wincott Starter kit"



9. Act as a conduit for feedback between women and cotton industry as required
10. Promote the network to a wide range of women involved in all aspects of the cotton industry through networking of members and through industry groups

### **Objectives Year 2:**

1. Continue objectives as in year 1
2. Introduce membership fees
3. Research funding options and develop plan to enable Wincott to attain a self funding status.

The above objectives have been achieved as can be seen in the following activities:

### **Objectives Achieved Year 1:**

1. Membership database since our AGM, in August 2005 when membership fees were abolished, numbers have risen again and is now at 280. It is envisaged that this will increase over time. With more sponsorship this will increase the awareness of what Wincott can actually achieve. The membership varies in age and area (from Emerald in the North to Nyngan in the south and also includes members from Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne). Members range from growers, consultants, researchers, partners of cotton industry personnel, spray applicators and many others. People can now subscribe through the website for free.

**1b. Website-** Ruth Quigley and Kate Schwager launched the website in August 2005 and is kept up to date. It is easy to negotiate and has had many positive responses. It has all the information about what Wincott is doing, messages from our sponsors as well as the latest cotton issues. Also available are past Newsletters and a calendar of events. [www.wincott.net.au](http://www.wincott.net.au)

### **2. Newsletters**

The Wincott newsletter is sent to all members by email and contains a quality and diversity of information that serves the needs of members. This includes

- Cotton Industry updates,
- contributions from members,
- Other agricultural websites
- Relevant government department websites.

#### *Outcome*

As well as receiving general information, the newsletters have been successful in encouraging members to attend Wincott-sponsored workshops and courses. The number of visits to the Newsletter page on the Wincott website has increased considerably, over and above the number of official members

### **3. Meetings**

Wincott meetings have been held to conduct the formal aspects of the organisation. They have been well attended since the inception of the organisation and have provided members with the opportunity to hear a diversity of speakers, principally from the cotton industry, the wider agricultural sector and women involved in natural resource management and rural businesses.

#### **2004**

The Annual General Meeting was held at the Cotton Conference 2004. Wincott appreciates the sponsorship of the venue from ACGRA. A new Executive was elected



with Helen Dugdale (Narrabri) as Chair, Alicia Dunbar (Emerald) as Vice Chair, Ruth Quigley (Trangie) as Treasurer and Kate Schwager (Wee Waa) as Secretary/Publicity Officer. Other committee members elected were Helen Bates (Goondiwindi), Vicki Kuhn (Emerald), Shayne Miller (Moree), Jon-Maree Baker (Narrabri), Penny Anderson (Theodore) We received great press coverage and over **60** women attended.

Excellent presentations from:

Jodi McLean (CRDC Narrabri) (recipient of the National Science and Innovation Award For Young People). Her topic was “Spilling the Beans on Genes - The Science of GM Cotton“.

Barbara Wildin, Chair of the Fitzroy Basin Association, who was also the first female Mayor of the Livingston Shire, on Natural Resource Management

Vice Chair Liz Alexander and Jon-Maree Baker presented Wincott’s Strategic Plan.

Jo Eady from Rural Scope Pty Ltd summed up the day with the announcement of the new skills course Wincott will be running during 2005. The delegates heard from past graduates of the course as to how helpful they found the course in giving them the extra skills to succeed in their chosen profession and community involvement.

## **2005**

**AGM in Narrabri** and over **50** women attended. Moved and passed that Membership Fees be abolished, as sponsorship from various companies had been obtained.

Guest speakers included:

Elise Munsie , Telstra Country Wide,

Maree McKay, Producer’s Forum re GM Technology,

Shayne Miller, Namoi Cotton, re Cotton Marketing

Dr Gabi Caswell, re Skin cancer and Skin therapy.

## **2006**

**AGM at the Cotton Conference in August.** Many thanks to the ACGRA for the hire of the room.

Guest speakers were:

Wendy Erhart – winner of the 2005 Veuve Cliquot Business Woman of the Year.

Belinda Wilson, Policy Advisor from the National Water.

Over **80** women attended

New people were elected to the committee as representatives from all the cotton growing valleys, which now numbers 11. This reflects the breadth and abilities of women in the industry.

## **4. Regional Workshops**

**March 2006 Information day at the Seplin Estate Wines, Wee Waa.** Guest speakers were:

Robyn Watson, cotton grower from Boggabri on “Cotton and the Environment do mix successfully”

Ann Maree Galagher, ANZ Bank on “ANZ and the community”

Anna Hurst, Monsanto on “GM/Bio technology”

Phil Tucker from Drummuster and “Safety around the farm”

Dr Gabi Caswell from the Eyra Skin Care Clinic on “skin cancer and skin therapy”.

It was a very informative day with about **35** ladies attending they found the speakers very interesting and gathered a great deal of information about the topics presented. The





feedback was very positive and we look forward to having a number of these in other valleys over the coming months.

**Dalby Information Day and Field Trip - November 2005,** 20 women attended an information and excursion to the Bayer Crop Science manufacturing plant at Pinkenba where all the cotton formulations for Australia are made. They also visited the Port of Brisbane where the facilities for all types of freight are found. They were extremely fortunate and privileged to be allowed into the Patrick Corporation terminal to see an entirely new system of handling containers. This was a rare opportunity to see something that the general public, and indeed much of the industry would never normally be able to view. We are very grateful to Bayer Crop Science for offering Wincott this opportunity.

**Dirranbandi Information Day, May 2005.** a very informative day in Dirranbandi, with people from St George attending as well. There were three excellent speakers:

Dr Gabi Caswell on farming and sun damaged skin;

Sarah Hood on water use efficiency and how Australian cotton industry compares with the rest of the world;

Veronica Chapman on Natural Resource Management.

Not only did attendees learn from these speakers about cotton and farm life, but the day was also another great opportunity to mix with women from other parts of the industry.

**Warren Information Day, November 2004** – Colly Cotton organised an information day at Budda Station. The Wincott Publicity officer, Kate Schwager was the guest speaker informing people about Wincott activities. It was attended by 60 women. The feedback was very satisfying from those who attended. To date we have had a few new members from this valley and one attending the Advancing Partnerships in Cotton Course. We received very good press coverage in “The Land” and the “Queensland Country Life” Cotton Insert.

**Qld Central Highlands** - Wincott members in this area have also held some general meetings, attracting a good roll up of women from all sectors of the Cotton Industry, including cotton growers, professional service providers of the industry, banking representatives who have a strong relationship with the cotton industry, and project officers from both government and semi government sectors. Their guest speaker, Mr Adam Loch, Acting Executive Officer, Fitzroy Basin Food and Fibre, gave an overview of the Fitzroy Basin Draft Resource Operation Plan. After learning of the potential implications, the Wincott group prepared a submission to the Department of Natural Resources and Mines seeking an extension to the consultation period by 6 months. This gave adequate time for the cotton industry to digest the information contained in the Draft and respond in-depth to a number of issues and impacts on the industry and the Central Highlands community.

**Central Highlands Qld** has organised quite a number of functions including Computer Training workshops and Commodity Trading in the Cotton Industry.

All these workshops and field days have helped women in the industry have a much better understanding of the cotton industry.



5. Various cotton industry and other organisations have asked Wincott to use our Network to inform women of their own workshops, training programs and other points of interest they have coming up. Obviously they feel that Wincott can provide a useful service for their organisation.

In February 2006 we were able to help CRDC promote the Healthy Farming Families Workshop and some of our members attended the Wee Waa and Dalby 2-day health workshops.

Wincott has also help promote the Cotton Industry's Skills Shortage training programs, run by Cotton Australia.

Wincott in conjunction with Grant Thornton Accountants, Sydney, have helped organise Succession Planning Workshops from July to late 2006, in a number of valleys. Workshops so far are Theodore, Goondiwindi, Dalby, Narrabri, Wee Waa and more are planned for Warren, Hillston and Walgett. These workshops aim to equip key decision makers on the farm, with the tools necessary to understand what is involved in Succession Planning and the importance of developing meaningful and effective succession strategies. Participants will gain an understanding of the issues surrounding Succession Planning and will be provided with a framework in which to prioritise and execute a course of action. The framework is designed to ensure that long term wishes may actually be realised. This an example of how Wincott helps rural people gain access to course and workshops which they may not otherwise be exposed to.

6. Promote communication between women in the industry – this is done via the many meetings, emails, and skills courses we have organised.
7. Support women new to the Industry – Starter Kit has been updated in May 2005 and checked by industry experts. This booklet is very popular even amongst non- Wincott members, as it provides basic, easy to understand details about the main issues in the industry.
8. see above
9. Various cotton industry and other organisations have asked Wincott to use our Network to inform women of their workshops, training programs and other points of interest they have coming up. Obviously they feel that Wincott can provide a useful service for their group.

Women at Wincott meetings can, and have, raised important relevant issues that need consideration by the industry. The committee have then passed on these concerns to relevant industry bodies.

10. Promote the network – Wincott has provided many media releases to usual rural media outlets as well the use of our own website and newsletters.

## **Objectives Achieved YEAR 2:**

1. Sponsorship - We now have a number of sponsors which include: Monsanto, ANZ, , Bayer Crop Science, Telstra, Drummuster and recently Grant Thornton Sydney.

We have applied for funding from Qld Farm Bis to run the APC Course in Dalby and produce an online forum for those women who are unable to attend in person. We have planned to make available a CD to help women improve their skills.



1b. Business Plan has been updated to fit in with the new financial year this will be available to members on the website after June

2. Membership Fees: have been abolished. Due to increased sponsorship, the 2005 AGM voted to abandon fees as the main aim for Wincott is to get the information to as many people as possible. This is a win/win situation for all concerned – sponsors have a bigger readership and more women get to hear about the Cotton Industry and its issues. For instance – official membership went from 70 to now being 280. This has then lead onto Objective 3.

3. Wincott is very close to being self funded due to the increased sponsorship. Sponsors see the benefits of being associated with Wincott and the value that we can give.

### **Ongoing Aims of Wincott**

- Continue coordination of communication and network activities via the Publicity Officer position as well as committee members in each valley.
- Continue facilitation of learning and upskilling activities through meetings, field days and newsletters relevant to the members.
- Provide opportunities to participate in various skills courses.
- Promotion of the network to a wide range of women involved in all aspects of the cotton industry through networking with members and industry groups to encourage wider participation and membership.
- Continue to be an information source for the wider cotton industry.
- 

### ***Methods***

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

To disseminate information and improve women's skills, the methodology used included: Membership Database; website; newsletters; information days; being a resource for the industry.

Having a presence at various Trade Shows and conferences. For example: Moree Trade Show, ACGRA Cotton Conference, CCA Conference, CWA Conference, AWiA conference

- Benefits for the cotton industry and for the community Social Impacts - Wincott strengthens the linkages between industry and the community and is a direct communication tool between industry, research, government and others to women who have a direct impact on the community's perception of the cotton industry. This is demonstrated through many of Wincott's activities. Wincott offers other avenues for women to participate and receive important, relevant information but also to voice their thoughts on industry issues in a comfortable environment. Increased participation and communication is a significant benefit to the cotton industry and has a positive effect on the community perception at all levels highlighting the cotton industry's value and role within the community.

- The Wincott communication strategy covers both the local “cotton community” through Ozcotton, ACIC, Cotton Yearbook and the Wincott Database, but also has communication linkages into the broader agricultural forum. Membership of AwiA and contributions to both NSW and Qld State agricultural departments provides a wide distribution of Wincott’s aims and opportunities available through the network.

### **Results**

*Detail and discuss the results for each objective including the statistical analysis of results.*

During the period of this current term of funding for Wincott, the following are just some of the events women in the cotton industry have had the opportunity to be involved in:

- Other Workshops: Succession Planning Workshops Wincott in conjunction with Grant Thornton Accountants, Sydney, that a series of Succession Planning Workshops (as mentioned earlier).
- Promotion of Healthy Farming Families 2006. In February 2006 we were able to help CRDC promote the Healthy Farming Families Workshops. Some of our members attended the Wee Waa and Dalby 2-day workshops. 38 cotton industry people attended these workshops and were very impressed with the valuable information they received. Some of the comments from these workshops were similar to the following:
  - “The program was a wake up call to stop taking things for granted and start taking greater control of our lives – health, wellbeing and family safety”
  - “We are encouraged to make some changes to our personal and family life. Hopefully better health outcomes will lead to better farm outcomes!”
- Meeting With Sugar Industry Women 2005 In February we hosted 20 women from the Sugar Industry. 20 local Namoi Valley women also attended this dinner meeting. Spokespeople from Cotton and Sugar gave a presentation about their respective industries. After that the conversations and comparisons just did not stop! One of the quotes from the Women in Sugar was that “they wished their industry was as open and communicative about production and research as our cotton industry.”
- Wincott Skills Course 2005. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Australian Partnerships in Cotton skills course was held in March and May 2005. This was organized by Jon Baker, who also obtained the funding from the Federal Office for Women. Again, this was a great success with all participants gaining skills to improve their own business opportunities and community activities. This course was run by Jo Eady, the highly motivational facilitator. Key industry personnel were also involved.

### **Outcomes**

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





- Skilled women, more members and more people aware of the true facts about growing cotton. Increase in attendance at Wincott meetings.
- Award Winning Members:
  - a) Sandy Young, attended the Advancing Partnerships in Cotton Course in 2005. This is a communications and leadership course run by Wincott. The skills gained at the course helped in her position as Manager of the Australian Cotton Exhibition Centre. Sandy then went on to win the Cotton Industry Young Achiever Award.
  - b) In February 2006, Wincott Publicity Officer, Kate Schwager, won the RIRDC Rural Women of the Year award for NSW and she has been able to generate a large amount of interest in the Wincott Group. She also attended the Australian Institute of Company Directors residential course held in Canberra in May 2006. Kate has also spoken at a number of venues including the CWA Conference (Narrabri), Nugan Group (Griffith). Upcoming functions include NSWWRWN Women's Gathering, (Grafton), QRWN Conference, (Brisbane), "Women out West", (Dubbo) and the Department of Natural Resources Women's Day (Tamworth). This all helps to promote Wincott and the Cotton Industry to the wider community.
  - c) Two of our committee members also nominated and was successful in winning the Cotton Research and Development Corporation award for Rural Industry Partnership Program. One in 2005 - Alicia Dunbar, cotton grower from Emerald, was successful in achieving this award and attended, on behalf of the cotton industry, the Australian Institute of Company Directors residential course held in Canberra in March 2005. And the second in 2006 - Victoria Cush, Moree cotton grower, has also received a scholarship to attend the course.

Both these women are worthy recipients of this scholarship and have already made a significant contribution to their community, as well as the cotton industry, and will continue to do so.
- Membership to Wincott is now free due to sponsorship. The sponsorship arrangement is a winning combination for all concerned. Sponsors' messages are relayed to the 'other half' of the cotton industry via Wincott which in turn is able to function and disseminate information and the women in the industry gain from this knowledge and become more informed with the facts about their industry.
- Macarthur Consulting assisted in the development of a strategic plan which has enabled the committee to develop a business plan for implementation and management of the network for 2007. This business has donated its expertise in support of Wincott.

### **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?*

Better informed industry, Cotton women more comfortable with knowledge about the industry.

- Building knowledge develops greater understanding of industry issues and, therefore, the impact on the industry as a whole, as well as the community. Women involved in the cotton industry are a direct link between industry and the community and Wincott is an effective vehicle for them to communicate industry values, research, key issues and other sustainability issues to cotton communities.
- Promoting the Cotton Industry. Wincott has also promoted the cotton industry in the broader Australian community through articles in the Outback magazine, Queensland Department of Primary Industries' Women's Industry Trade Fair and NSW Agriculture's Rural Women's Network Country Web, Women's Weekly, Australian Cotton Grower Magazine, Australian Country Style Magazine, CRDC Spotlight Magazine, the newsletter of the Office for Women and the Regional Business Magazine.
- On a broader scale, through participation in the Australian Women in Agriculture internet forum, Wincott has been able to promote science-based discussion and disseminate information from industry researchers regarding issues such as genetically modified organisms, water use and environmental issues into the email forum, which is accessed by women in all agricultural industries.
- Wincott newsletters transfer a wide range of information available through industry, government and local community sources into an organised and accessible format that many network members have used to pursue learning opportunities.

### ***Extension Opportunities***

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

- to further develop or to exploit the project technology.*
- for the future presentation and dissemination of the project outcomes.*
- for future research.*

Run the Advancing Partnerships in Cotton Course  
 Hold more information days and field days in other valleys  
 Cotton Grower magazine articles  
 Rural Press articles in each valley  
 Radio announcements/interviews  
 Quarterly newsletters  
 Website updates  
 CRDC Spotlight magazine  
 Seek more sponsorship

### ***A. List the publications arising from the research project and/or a publication plan.***

*(NB: Where possible, please provide a copy of any publication/s)*

- Wincott Starter Kit gives an excellent overview of the industry structure, research and production information and links to existing industry resources. It is being used by a number of industry personnel as a resource for new growers entering the cotton industry. It has been updated with current information in May 2006.
- Industry Training Programs: ie. Aust Partnerships in Cotton.
- 2006 Cotton Conference Paper
- 2005 Cotton Year Book
- 2006 Cotton Year Book

**B. *Have you developed any online resources and what is the website address?***

- Committee members Ruth Quigley and Kate Schwager, from Webteam Australia, developed the website and launched it at our AGM in Narrabri in 2005. It has many more hits than we have members. Kate and Ruth ensure the website is kept up to date. It looks fabulous and is easy to navigate. It has all the information about Wincott activities as well as the latest cotton issues. It is a great asset as a conduit to and from the industry and to our sponsors. Also available are past Newsletters and a calendar of events. [www.wincott.net.au](http://www.wincott.net.au)

## **Part 4 – Final Report Executive Summary**

---

Wincott – the Women’s Industry Network Cotton – has achieved all the objectives of this project. Founded in 2002, it now operates successfully as a network for women involved directly and indirectly in the Australian cotton industry.

Original funding from the Cotton Research and Development Corporation established the network and provided co-ordination for the development and research of relevant services. Wincott has progressed its goal to become self sufficient through sponsorship from our gold sponsors: Monsanto, ANZ, Grant Thornton, and silver sponsorship from: Telstra, Bayer Crop Science and Drummuster

Wincott provides members with opportunities for personal and career development and fosters their mainstream industry participation, benefiting the industry at the same time with a new or improved talent pool. It caters for women at all levels of skills, confidence and aspirations, ranging from those who wish to learn more about cotton growing and the cotton industry through to women who may wish to undertake a broader role within the industry or in the wider agricultural or natural resource sectors. A number of Wincott members have used the skills gained through Wincott to take up important leadership roles in the industry or to contribute to their regional communities.

The Wincott network is cost effective and uses existing industry structures and a wide range of resources to achieve its aims and objectives. In the final year of the project (2005–06), membership fees were abolished. Members used the skills, confidence and contacts they have gained from Wincott activities to seek other sources of sponsorship and project funding, meaning Wincott has achieved the important objective of becoming a strong and financially self-sustaining organisation.

Wincott’s current database has 280 women on it, with membership stretching from Emerald in Queensland to Hillston in New South Wales, as well as metropolitan areas. Membership encompasses growers, consultants, researchers, partners of cotton personnel, spray applicators and many others.

The current committee of eleven, is indicative of the strength & breadth of membership. They include growers, consultants, reserachers and industry personnel from all the cotton growing regions.

From its inception Wincott has organised information days, training courses, assistance with applications for grants and awards and regular newsletters and has an up-to-date website ([www.wincott.net.au](http://www.wincott.net.au)), launched at the Annual General Meeting in Narrabri in



2005. This has a range of information, from Wincott activities (including past newsletters) to cotton industry news and updates on cotton industry-related regulatory issues. It provides links to relevant cotton, agricultural and government websites. The number of visits to the Newsletters page on the Wincott website has increased considerably and the newsletters have been a successful tool for promoting Wincott-sponsored workshops and courses.

Wincott has achieved widespread acceptance within the cotton industry because of its success in providing women with the confidence and knowledge to participate fully within the mainstream industry. Wincott has become a valuable means of disseminating information throughout the industry. Other cotton organisations now use Wincott to promote industry events such as farm health and skills shortage workshops and Wincott's cotton industry 'starter kit', which provides basic, easy to understand details about the industry is being used by other industry organisations. After an approach by Grant Thornton Accountants, Sydney, Wincott is assisting with succession planning workshops in all cotton valleys in the second half of 2006.

Wincott has also worked to strengthen the linkages between the cotton industry and the community and provides direct communication between industry, research organisations, government and other organisations that have a direct impact on the community's perception of the cotton industry. This work has been aided by Wincott media releases, articles in rural magazines and newspapers and a stand at trade fairs and the Australian Cotton Conference to promote the organisations's work. Through the Australian Women in Agriculture forum, Wincott has been able to promote science-based discussion and disseminate information on issues such as biotechnology, water use and environmental issues to women in other agricultural industries.

Looking to the future, Wincott will continue its present range of activities and actively seek opportunities to provide further information and training opportunities for its members, while pursuing further sponsorships to enable new activities.