



## SMALL GRANT REPORT

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| <b>CRDC ID:</b>              | LNCGA 12135                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>Project Title:</b>        | Grassroots Grants: 2026 Camp Cotton Riverside Dinner – an opportunity for the local cotton community to meet with global and Australian customers |
| <b>Start Date:</b>           | 01/02/2026                                                                                                                                        |
| <b>End Date:</b>             | 10/04/2026                                                                                                                                        |
| <b>Principal Researcher:</b> | Daniel Kahl                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>Organisation:</b>         | Lower Namoi Cotton Growers Association                                                                                                            |

### Project Summary

The Lower Namoi Camp Cotton Riverside networking dinner was delivered as part of the broader Camp Cotton program funded by Australian cotton growers through [Cotton Australia](#). The purpose of the project was to strengthen connections between Australian cotton growers, local communities, and global fashion and textile stakeholders through a community engagement event held in Narrabri during the Camp Cotton tour.

The event successfully brought together more than 100 attendees, including growers, industry representatives, researchers, local community members, and delegates from Australia and international brands and retailers. The dinner provided an opportunity for delegates to experience the Lower Namoi community firsthand, build relationships across the supply chain, and gain a greater understanding of Australian regional communities.

### Outcomes & Impact for Industry

The project successfully delivered a professionally coordinated networking dinner that created meaningful engagement between growers and global and Australian supply chain stakeholders. The event stimulated conversation and understanding of Australian cotton production practices, sustainability initiatives, and the importance of regional cotton communities.

The project aligned strongly with CRDC objectives by supporting knowledge-sharing, industry transparency, and stronger community connections. Delegates were able to engage directly with growers and local industry members, helping build trust and long-term relationships across the supply chain.

The event also provided positive exposure for the Lower Namoi region and reinforced the value and reputation of Australian cotton to brands and retailers, as well as its collaborative nature.

There were no major variations from the original application plan, with catering, equipment hire, entertainment, and community activities successfully delivered as proposed.

**1. M&E Outcomes: number of outcomes achieved:**

- 1 successful community networking dinner delivered.
- More than 100 attendees participated in the event.
- Direct engagement facilitated between growers, brands, retailers, researchers, and community members.
- Increased awareness and understanding of Australian cotton sustainability and regional communities among delegates.
- Positive promotion of the Lower Namoi region and Australian cotton industry through delegate engagement and Cotton Australia communications.
- 1000 native crayfish released into the river

**M&E Outcomes: Number of outcomes achieved.**

6

**People Connections**

- Itinerary: [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1clWewhzjPMb3qP60VxpOLc7SK8CYL2o-/view?usp=drive\\_link](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1clWewhzjPMb3qP60VxpOLc7SK8CYL2o-/view?usp=drive_link)
- Delegate & Staff listing: [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1cXH61teYFp3dLBrHvrJ51qk\\_il7Cm-rV/view?usp=drive\\_link](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1cXH61teYFp3dLBrHvrJ51qk_il7Cm-rV/view?usp=drive_link)

Meaningful connections were made between the 50 Camp Cotton delegates, and 20 local cotton industry representatives with discussions ranging from the role of the CGA, to sustainability topics such as IPM and biodiversity.

**M&E People: Number of connections achieved.**

70

**Learnings**

**Key Learnings**

- Direct, face-to-face engagement with growers had the greatest impact on delegates' understanding of the Australian cotton industry.
- Delegates valued learning and asking questions across different areas of the industry from research partners to the local mayor.
- Hearing directly from growers and regional communities helped build trust, transparency, and stronger emotional connection to Australian cotton.

#### General Delegate Feedback Themes

- Delegates consistently described the program as professionally delivered, engaging, and highly informative.
- Many participants noted that the Lower Namoi Camp Cotton networking dinner exceeded expectations and provided a much deeper understanding of cotton communities in Australia.
- The network opportunity at the dinner was highly valued, particularly the ability to interact with growers and industry leaders in an informal setting.
- Delegates appreciated the openness of growers and the willingness of industry representatives to answer questions and share challenges and opportunities honestly.

#### Positive Feedback on Connection to Local Industry & Community

- Delegates highlighted that meeting growers and local families was one of the most valuable and memorable aspects of the program.
- The Lower Namoi Camp Cotton networking dinner created an opportunity for personal conversations between growers and global brands and retailers.
- Participants commented positively on the hospitality, generosity, and pride shown by local farming communities.
- The Lower Namoi Camp Cotton networking dinner experience were regularly mentioned as standout moments that strengthened understanding of regional cotton communities.
- Delegates valued seeing firsthand how regional communities, research organisations, and growers work together to support the Australian cotton industry.

#### Additional Points You Could Include (as a whole program)

- Overall Camp Cotton experience rating averaged 5/5 from delegates.
- Delegates' perception of the Australian cotton industry improved significantly following the tour, increasing from an average rating of 3.59/5 before the tour to 5/5 afterwards.
- Networking opportunities throughout the program received an average rating of 4.71/5.
- Delegates particularly valued learning about water management, biodiversity, traceability, GM technology, and integrated pest management.
- Many delegates stated the experience created stronger confidence in sourcing and advocating for Australian cotton within their organisations.

#### 7. M&E learnings: number of learnings and planned actions from the project

- Continue strengthening relationships with participating brands, retailers, and industry stakeholders through ongoing communication and future Camp Cotton programs.
- Incorporate additional education and technical content into future programs based on delegate feedback and areas of interest.
- Expand opportunities for direct grower-to-brand engagement to further support trust and long-term demand for Australian cotton.
- Use delegate feedback to improve future regional events, networking opportunities, and industry immersion experiences.

#### **M&E Learnings: Number of learnings and planned actions for the project.**

20

#### **Do you have recommendations for CRDC (eg RD&E gaps?)**

- Further explore opportunities for regional community engagement initiatives that showcase the social, environmental, and economic contribution of cotton-growing regions.
- Consider ongoing support for industry immersion programs such as Camp Cotton, which play an important role in strengthening trust and long-term demand for Australian cotton across the global supply chain.