



Australian Government

**Cotton Research and
Development Corporation**

FINAL REPORT 2013/2014

Part 1 - Summary Details

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

CRDC Project Number: CGA1304 – Namoi Valley Cotton Growers Association

Project Title: Capacity Building at the Cotton Fibre Expo

Project Commencement Date: 30th March 2013

Project Completion Date: 30th June 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.
 - There isn't another Cotton Fibre Expo (ACFE) like this one in the world. Entrants to the Expo are showcasing to the world the versatility, practicality and uniqueness of cotton. The ACFE ask entrants to be creative as possible, with the only criteria being the need to be made with at least 90% cotton. The categories range from interpretative sections of wearable art, fashion, surface design and "quirky calico" to the more traditional crafts. The Expo organisers received inquiries from design schools around the nation regarding the 2013 expo and its categories, thus we anticipate that 2015 will be full of young and vibrant new design ideas.

Objectives

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

- The Australian Cotton Fibre Expo seeks to continue educating cotton growers in the Lower Namoi, and the wider community who are involved in cotton production, to the versatility of cotton for the end user.

- The 2013 expo was again another huge success with entrants being received from varied regions within Australia. We had over 400 guests throughout the exhibition. The guests came from within the Lower Namoi Region and wider, they experienced first-hand the versatility of cotton and how it allows designers to create their unique pieces.
 - Our fashion parade sponsor Marg. Enklemann also showcased an intriguing parade on what can be done with materials found on the farm and in manufacturing plants and how they can too be made into fashionable garments. All her product was made solely from cotton/farm items and thus was interpreted into wearable art.
- The expo allows the growers in the region to see how our local cotton is received in the market, at the end product, and how it is utilised both within the local region through to the international community.
- Growers in the region were given the opportunity to view the items entered into the expo throughout the two weeks it was open. The fashion garments were also part of the luncheons fashion parade. Many of the unique items on show detailed where they were made and how they were made. Some of the commercial products also had price indications listed which enabled viewers to see the commercial viability of the product.
- The project also has the ability to showcase the role of women in the cotton industry, demonstrating the importance of a female viewpoint in the business.
- This was achieved through our Guest Speaker, Barbara Grey, addressing the 200 guest audience at the Cotton Fibre Expo Official Opening luncheon, held on 11th May. Barbara focused on to the need for the end user to understand the product and also for the growers to be proactive in their management structures and business methods to ensure they stay up to date with Industry news and possible models to implement. Not only did Barbara engage the audience with her knowledge as a female cotton grower she also provided insight into the importance of women in business at the local level and also at a national level.
 - As indicated above, Marg. Enklemann also showcased an intriguing parade on what can be done with materials found on the farm and in manufacturing plants and how they can too be made into fashionable garments. All her product was made solely from cotton/farm items and thus was interpreted into wearable art. Her story was an intriguing and very real scenario for local growers to be inspired by.
- The Cotton Fibre Expo entrant categories encourage innovation and creativity from its design entries. Whilst it supports the more traditional elements of cotton use, such as quilting and embroidery, it also encourages the modern entries in the Creative Wearable Art, Quirky Calico and Recycled Cotton sections. Thus encouraging the wider community to think about cotton and its versatility. The exposure of these national designers then assists to educate the local community to talent and importance of cotton to the Australian design world.
- The new sections in the 2103 Expo proved to be the most popular in this year's event from an entrant's perspective and also a judge's perspective. It was noted in the Judges reports that the "New sections for the Expo were most satisfactory – should be retained for next Expo. Judges felt they were most appropriate". The wearable art section was also endorsed by the Gold Coast School of design who paraded many of the garments entered at the Expo's Fashion Parade and received positive reviews both during and post the event.

Methods

2. Detail the methodology and justify the methodology used. Include any discoveries in methods that may benefit other related projects.
 - It was imperative that this event was marketed as a national event so all designers and cotton growers were aware of the event.
 - Three external judges from the Fashion Industry were endorsed to judge the 2013 categories to ensure the entrants received feedback from National Credible sources.
 - Each Entrant was asked to fill out the entry form thus detailing how and why they made the garment.
 - Each Judge then gave feedback (where possible) to the entrant on the design and their interpretation of the final piece.
 - It was highlighted that the new sections in the expo were both credible and highly participated in and therefore will continue to be included in future parades.
 - The Expo sought to inspire local women in the cotton industry to think outside the box, and out two guest speakers/entertainers certainly did this.

Outcomes

3. Describe how the project's outputs will contribute to the planned outcomes identified in the project application. Describe the planned outcomes achieved to date.
 - Key output: The local community will be engaged and educated through hearing first hand of her experience in the Australian Cotton Industry
 - 2013 Expo Guest speaker, Barbara Grey from Mungindi, Queensland, has been an irrigated cotton grower for the past 30 years. The innovative and efficient practices she has put in place on their farm has led to the prestigious Cotton Australia 'Innovative Grower of the Year Award' in 2007, and consistently being placed in the top five percentile of their region's benchmarking group for cotton growing.

Barbara is Chair of the Women's Industry Network -- Cotton and Non-executive Director of the Cotton Co-operative Research Centre. She is a graduate of the Australian Rural Leadership Foundation. And as such she spoke to our audience about the importance of productive rural industries and regional communities and her concern about what she believes is a growing disconnect between rural people and government and decision makers. She finished by encouraging all women in the room to gain their voice and ensure that standards and regulation is to the benefit of our local community.
 - The Expo provided an ideal venue for the exchange of ideas and demonstration of support between women in the cotton industry
4. Please report on any:-
 - a) Feedback forms used and what the results were:
 - Positive Feedback was received from various guests who attended the luncheon and also from local growers who viewed the expo throughout the week.

- The only group to send through official feedback forms were from the three judges concerning the entrants work and its level of finish.
- a) The highlights for participants or key learning achieved
 - Highlights have been based around the expos entrants in the sections and that by introducing the new sections of wearable Art and Quirky Calico they have captured a younger age group than had been traditionally captured in the past.
 - A Key learning was around the singular use of the Gold Coast Design School. There may be room to integrate a second or third school into the expo, alternatively it may be time to change schools to engage a different design field.
- a) The number of people participating and any comments on level of participation
 - Numbers for the Expo luncheon were lower than anticipated and therefore discussion commend around the structure of the event for 2015, timings of the event will also be considered.

Budget

5. Describe how the project's budget was spent in comparison with the application budget. Outline any changes and provide justification.
 - The budget was spent in full on the guest speakers and the fashion parade as projected.

Conclusion

6. 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?
 - Post the event positive discussion took place by the committee members regarding the Expo. There were two fundamental messages which were raised frequently;
 - The expo provided a valued opportunity for designers to showcase their garments and items in an Industry Endorsed event.
 - The expo provided the local community with an excellent opportunity for local growers to view cotton as the end product. The luncheon speakers certainly provided a forum for women in the cotton industry to socialize and support each other within the industry.

Extension Opportunities

7. Detail a plan for the activities or other steps that may be taken:
 - To tell other CGAs/growers/regions about your project.
The report will be handed to the LNCGA for review
 - To keep in touch with participants.
Each entrant has been communicated with post event and will be kept up to date with all future plans for a 2015 event.
 - For future projects.
A 2015 Cotton Fibre expo will take place – date TBC.