



FINAL REPORT

Part 1 - Summary Details

CRDC Project Number: CGA1507 Menindee & Lower Darling

Project Title: *Education and Development of the Cotton Industry*

Project Commencement Date: 1/12/14 **Project Completion Date:** 01/07/15

Part 2 – Contact Details

Administrator: Emma Ayliffe, Secretary, Menindee and Lower Darling CGA

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Part 3 – Final Report

Background

We are part of an organisation formed throughout cotton growing areas in Australia by local growers and sponsored by Cotton Australia with aims to;

1. Be a link between the grower, community and industry,
2. Promote cotton production as a sustainable and responsible industry,
3. Be a source of information for members and the community.

We do this by supporting events that are going on in our community and educating people within our district about the cotton industry, as well as promoting ourselves, what we do, our growers and anything else that we have to offer.

Objectives

This project has three key aspects that we aimed to deliver on:

1. To continue our work with two trainee students from Menindee Central School in terms of completing their traineeships and helping to get them job ready through training and/or the purchasing of equipment for the future careers. This programme encourages students to finish year 11 and year 12 as well as continuing with further education whether it be in the form of a trade or further formal studies.
2. Getting local school students and community member to the lake to get a first-hand experience of a cotton farm, as well as to learn about agriculture in general. This exposes people for within our community (Menindee and Broken Hill) as well as further away (Mildura, Riverland etc.) to the farm and what we do. There is always a focus to senior school students to help show them all of the career options that are available in cotton but we welcome anyone with open arms.

3. Educating and promoting the general public on the cotton industry and specifically our grower, Lake Tandou. This is commonly done by supporting local events either through time, equipment or money and representing the CGA at these events where possible.

Methods

For each of our three areas, we had a slightly different approach:

1. We continued to liaise with the Menindee central school as to the needs to the two year 12 students that are continuing to undertake training at Tandou to determine their requirements, as well as talking to the two students about what their plans were for the future. We also communicated with Tandou in regards to what extra they needed to help facilitate the completion of the placement.
2. Getting in touch with local schools and community groups in regards to organising visits to the farm to get exposure to the cotton industry as well as agriculture in general. Also an effort to embrace the groups that contact us was made.
3. Advertising and creating a good image for cotton through the sponsorship of community events and opening up our grower to the immediate public so that they can see the enterprise and all of the positive aspects of having cotton grown in the district.

Outcomes

The outputs from these projects are as follows:

- A further 12 months for the two high school students working at Tandou to complete their requirements to complete their year 12 as well as gain industry experience.
- Increase the knowledge of local schools as well as the general public as to the Cotton Industry and all of the good it provides in this community as well as provide a potential gateway into the industry.
- Support of local events and not-for-profit groups to help with community projects to help showcase the Cotton industry as well as to help improve the relationship between the local community (Menindee, Broken Hill) and our grower, Tandou.

The outcomes that we were able to generate in the last 6 months include:

Toby Burt and Elton Johnston have continued their traineeships at Tandou. They are still working one day a week and are close to completing their traineeship requirements. Both boys are still taking part in various aspects of work on the farm, although it has been disappointing to see their enthusiasm drop this year. Both boys are looking to move into Mechanics of some description so instead of training we have opted to buy them a small toolbox to help them with their future endeavours.

As our grower, Tandou has no water for the next season we have decided to not take on a new traineeship student. Instead with a potentially quieter year there is an opportunity to help further improve our relationship with the school and spend more time with the whole year 12 agriculture and primary industry students.

This year we have struggled to find schools that are interested in visiting the farm for various reasons which has been disappointing. We did however have the year 12 Agriculture teacher from Broken Hill High School come and spend a day on Tandou with the CGA secretary and Tandou Agronomist Emma Ayliffe to learn about the cotton industry. There is hope that in time with a new found connection that there may be potential to build a relationship with the school over time. As stated above it is hard to promote the cotton industry when there is no water to grow cotton in our district currently. To help overcome this, the CGA committee are volunteering their time in July to attend the career expo in Broken Hill in July.

On Monday the first of June the River to Rail Rally to raise money for Prostate Cancer research came through and where taken for a tour around Lake Tandou by the two Agronomists/CGA Secretary and Treasurer. This group was primarily for South Australia so it was great to get some exposure to our neighbours to the south.

A big part of this funding has been used to fund local events to try and improve our exposure to the local community, as well as to help improve the attitude of the community to cotton. We have helped to local shire to help finish a multipurpose shed that has been built in Menindee with the aim to have a suitable space to run sporting event and other gatherings for the local community, especially the younger community. Tandou in conjunction with the MLD CGA hosted a Biggest Morning Tea to raise money for the Cancer Council, raising a grand total of \$685.50, which was very impressive considering the small number of people present.

Continued on from last year, we once again provided a monetary donation the Pooncarie outreach children's services to help them continue to support isolated children in our region. There is hope that there will be continued and an improved relationship with this group. We also donated towards the republication of the "Birds on Cotton Farms" book in the form of an App.

Finally our biggest spend this year has been to sponsor the building on a commentators box for the Little Topar Campdraft Site for the Broken Hill Branch of the Australian Stock Horse Society. This is a major event in our district, and having great facilities available will continue to help improve the reputation of this event, as well as allowing exposure of the CGA to a wide range of people. There is a great opportunity to continue to help expose us to the rest of the rural community into the future.



The small but hungry crowd at our biggest morning tea



Tandou Ltd

biggestmorningtea.com.au





Letter of acceptance for the BHASHS



First load of metal arrives for construction

Tool Boxes Supplied to Toby and Elton at the completion of their traineeships

48 Yartla Street

Menindee NSW 2879

15th July 2015

Dear Cotton Growers Association

I would like to thank everyone for your assistance during my time as a school based trainee over the past 2 years. I have really enjoyed my time and I have gained heaps of new skills.

A special thank you to the boys in the workshop for their help.

After I finish school I hope to put these skills into use and gain employment in the metals/ engineering or agricultural areas.

Yours Sincerely


Toby Burt

11 Yartla Street

Menindee NSW 2879

15th July 2015

Dear Tandou / Cotton Growers Association

I would just like to thank you all for your assistance during my time as a school based trainee over the past 2 years. I have really enjoyed my time and I have learnt plenty. I would especially like to thank the boys in the workshop for their help.

After I finish school I hope to go into either mechanics or boiler making. The skills I have developed at Tandou will certainly help me here.



Yours Sincerely

Elton Johnstone



Budget

Application Budget:

EXPENDITURE		Sub-Totals
Traineeships	Tools/training etc.	2,000.00
	<u>Tandou supervision and support</u>	8,000.00
School ag development	School Visits 3 x \$1500	4,500.00
Sponsorship of Local Events		4,500.00
Total Expenditure		\$19,000.00
Cash Requested from CRDC		\$10,00.00

Actual Expenditure

EXPENDITURE		Sub-Totals
Traineeships	Toolboxes	998.00
	<u>Tandou supervision and support</u>	10,000.00
School ag development	School Teacher From Broken Hill	500.00
	River to Rail Tour	200.00
Education/promotion to the public	Multipurpose shed Menindee	1,500.00
	Biggest Morning Tea - Catering	49.34
	Pooncarie Outreach Children's Services	500.00
	Broken Hill Stock Horse Society	9,000.00
	Birds on Cotton Farms Apps	200.00
Total Expenditure		\$22,947.34
	CGA Money	\$2,247.34
	Grower Support	\$5,000.00
	Time in Kind	\$5,700.00
Funding Spent		\$10,000.00

As can be seen through the difference of the budgets, due to the lack interest that we have been able to generate through the local schools we have had to redirect a lot of the funding to local community events and groups. Although this is not what we had hoped we still believe that the money has gone to some good causes and has allowed us to connect with our local community and spread the good work of cotton. Representation at these events and groups has also helped, and as there is continued work to do this will help to strengthen the bond with some of these groups and help us, and them, into the future.

Conclusion

Once again we have not been able to fulfil our original goals but we have been able to redirect that money into other events in the community and other causes that we consider to be valuable. We have been able to further build on our community involvement from previous year and extend our sponsorship to a wider range of people, in turn increasing our target audience, while also advertising the good side of the cotton industry. The larger projects are going to help nurture longer term relationships which are a benefit.

The biggest challenge that we are about to face is that there is no water for cotton in our district so therefore there will be no crops to showcase. This is going to be a critical period for our CGA, continuing to remain a valued member of the community, even with no production currently. We are already looking to projects involving local groups in the next 12 months.

Extension Opportunities

We hope to continue building our relationship with our immediate community. We set up and MLDCGA Facebook page to showcase all of the things that we are doing in our community, as well as interesting and relevant stories. The CGA runs a monthly e-newsletter as another form of advertisement of all of the great work that is happening.

At the completion of our Commentators Box at the Little Topar there will be a story hopefully run in the Australian Campdrafting magazine. We are always open to interviews or the like to showcase what we are doing in our corner of the cotton industry.