



Learning in the regions

The case of cotton

SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH FOR REGIONAL AUSTRALIA CONFERENCE.

RIVERS OF OPPORTUNITY: ACTIVATING YOUR POTENTIAL 20-22 AUGUST 2019

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Introduction

Drawn from CRDC 1710: Longitudinal assessment of the cotton industry's 'People' investment

Sub-sample from the regions who are in professional occupations.

Story about how these scholarship recipients used the knowledge and skills they developed to give back to their local communities, their industry and more broadly to agriculture

Cotton stats

- ▶ global industry
- ▶ 4/5th largest producer (3%)
- ▶ rep for quality
- ▶ NSW & Qld
- ▶ 2017-18: 450,000 ha
- ▶ irrigated & GM
- ▶ crop/livestock enterprise
- ▶ Small industry - 24 m ha broadacre crops
- ▶ Agriculture contributes 3% to Australia's GDP



Methods

CRDC study: Two online surveys with follow up

- Survey 1 = 100 (RR 76%)
- Survey 2 = 59 (RR 87%)
- Thematic analysis of open-ended survey responses
- Quantitative analysis of closed survey responses

Today's sub sample:

- n=47
- All completed Survey 1 and 31 completed Survey 2
- Same analysis

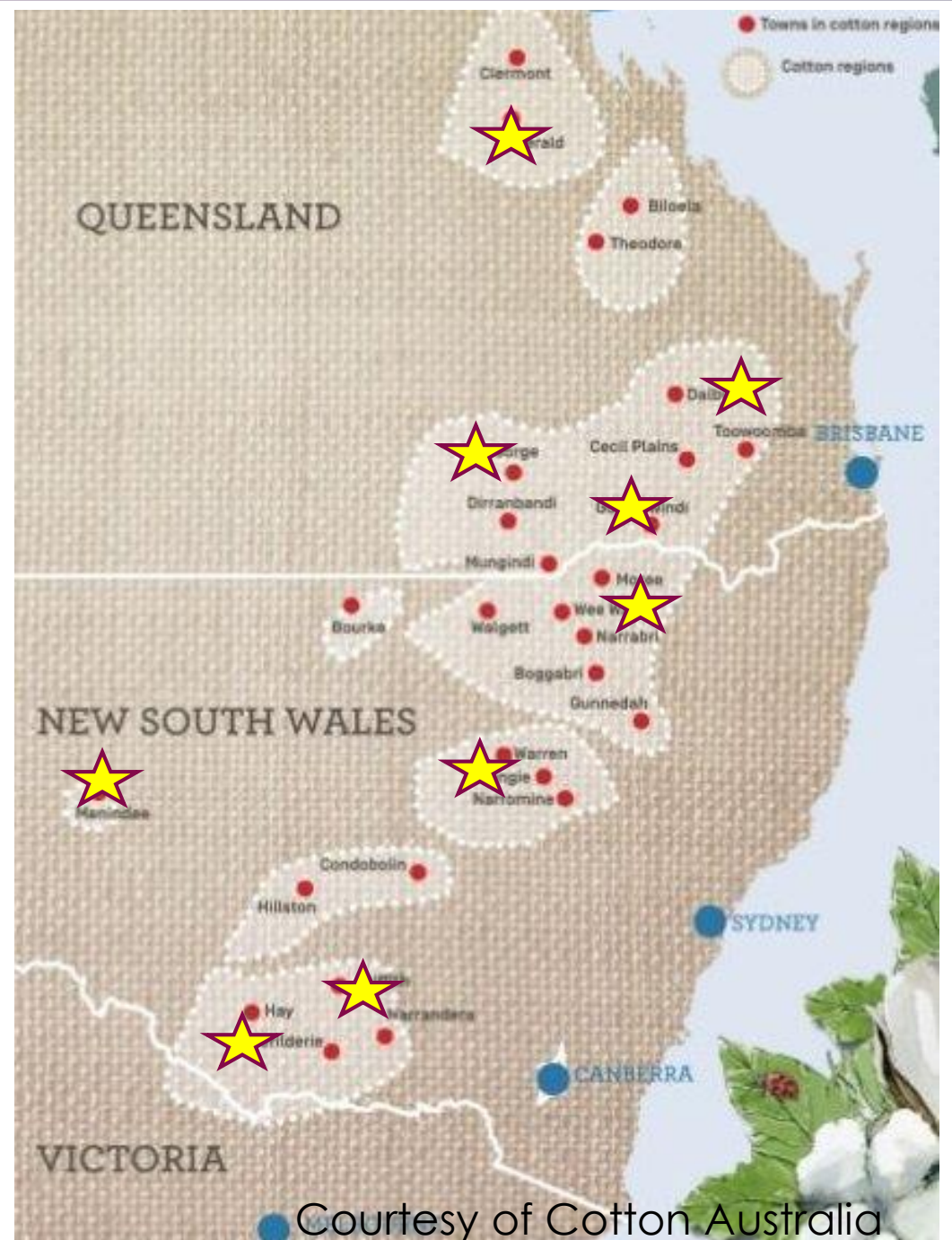
Sample - demographics

47 scholarship recipients in professional occupations living in regional communities

- ▶ 51% male
- ▶ 57% in 20s, 13% in 30s and the remainder older
- ▶ Occupations:
 - ▶ 32% Agronomists
 - ▶ 23% Agribusiness
 - ▶ 21% Farmers
 - ▶ 12% Managers
 - ▶ 7% Extension officers
 - ▶ 5% Administration

Where the sub sample live:

- 26 NSW
- 18 Qld
- 2 Vic
- 1 WA



Professional	No.	Academic	No.
Future Leaders	18	Summer	4
Cotton conference	14	Honours	3
Peter Cullen Trust	2	Horizon	3
Nuffield	2	PhD	1
Totals	36		11

Year scholarship completed:

- 61% 2014 – 2016
- 39% 2008 – 2013

About the scholarships

Results

Breadth and depth of how these scholarship recipients used their knowledge and skills to give back to their local communities, their industry and more broadly to agriculture.

Breadth	Depth
Audience	Knowledge
Reach	Methods
Roles	Skills

Breadth

Audience	Reach		Roles
Farmers	Reach- geographical	Regional	Presenter
Professionals		National	Leadership
Academics		International	Committee exec; Board; Panel
School children	Reach - industry	Cotton	Researcher
University students		Agriculture	CGAs
		University	Young Farmers Champion
			Author

What did giving back look like - Audience



To farmers



'Present to farmers during my everyday job with confidence since scholarship'



To professionals



'Work with peers to support the industry & present days of information'



To academics



'Presentations at UNE; and conferences in Aust and NZ.'

Reach: geographical & industry/sector

Regional

- ▶ 'agronomist networks'; 'Valley specific IPM workshops'

National

- ▶ 'Cotton Production Manual contribution for several years'
- ▶ 'Cotton Young Farming Champion'

Cotton industry

- ▶ 'Cotton Collective'; 'Coordinated north-west industry risk management planning'

Agriculture

- ▶ 'Work with start up companies, some of which are os based. Provide technical expertise-allows their product to be relevant to Aust market. Trying to break into Australian market'.

Roles

▶ **Leadership**

- ▶ 'Established local pest animal taskforce with cross industry participation'
- ▶ 'Cotton Young Farming Champion - promoting and engaging school children'

▶ **Presenter**

- ▶ 'Invited guest speaker to CGA event'
- ▶ 'Crop Consultants Australia: annual forums'

▶ **Panel member, Committee Executive, Board**

- ▶ 'Cotton Australia Board member; board member of Crop Consultants Australia'
- ▶ 'CRDC human capacity panel'

▶ **Researcher:** 'ran research trials'; 'grass roots grant'; 'mealy bug research'.

Depth

Knowledge	Methods	Skills
Applying	Education/Development	Networking
Sharing	Collaborative	Leadership
Acquiring	Networking	<i>Professional development</i>
Creating	Translation/adaptation	<i>Scientific</i>
		<i>Presentation</i>
		Organisational
		Teaching

Knowledge

Applying

- 'increased level of leadership: from being in someone else's team, now lead team of 3'.
- 'Better understanding of how to lead, and get things done'
- 'Scholarship provided me greater confidence to provide my opinions and seek feedback, allowed me to be more accepting of feedback'

Sharing

- 'The Field Day assists growers with new found knowledge and contacts throughout the industry'.
- 'Cross sector presentations: the 'cotton person' e.g. Biotech meeting'
- 'Spreading the good word on social media about the industry'

Methods

Educational/Developmental

- 'Client support with professional advice'
- 'implementing adaptive technologies to irrigation management'
- 'Guest lecturer CSU agribusiness'

Collaborative

- 'Participated in regional strategy for crisis management'
- 'Wincott'
- 'Work with peers to support the industry and present days of information to benefit the sector as a whole'

Skills

▶ **Networking**

- ▶ 'Invited by incubators interested in ag tech to provide technical expertise - this evolved through my networks'.
- ▶ 'Local young farmer meetings'
- ▶ 'graduates of the leadership course - links with these people'

▶ **Leadership**

- ▶ 'Chair of Local irrigation scheme-industry network'
- ▶ 'Nu water project management committee'
- ▶ 'Executive member DDCGA'

Decision category	Important (%)
Personal development	100
Career progress	96
Networking	86
Financial	40
Meeting expectations (family; employer)	33

How important
...
deciding
to apply

Prior intention & scholarship influence

Prior intention

- ▶ 67% reported intending to undertake a cotton career prior to the scholarship

Scholarship influence

- ▶ 70% reported that doing the scholarship influenced them towards undertaking a cotton career.



Barriers & unexpected benefits

Barriers

- ▶ Balancing competing demands (work; family; scholarship)
- ▶ Lack of confidence
- ▶ Skills
- ▶ Relationships
- ▶ Financial

Unexpected benefits

- ▶ Networking
- ▶ Personal development

Conclusions

How learning from formal training, accessed through a competitive process was applied.

That almost $\frac{3}{4}$ reported that the scholarship positively influenced them towards a cotton career indicates the important role of scholarships in contributing talent and capability to support the industry for the future.

Through a scholarship program this aspirational group are activating their potential and accessing what some have found to be rivers of opportunity

Take home message: industry-funded training is available in agriculture, and as for cotton, has the potential to make a difference.