

Cotton Australia Diversity in Ag Leadership Program Partner Pledge

OCTOBER 2022

Cotton Australia continues to make every effort to boost gender diversity, not only within the leadership of our organization, but also the industry more broadly.

There is no more telling recognition of the growing influence and leadership of women in cotton than the recently graduated Future Cotton Leaders participants. Of the 15 participants in the 2022 program, eight are women. They were chosen because of their knowledge, skills and talent, and also the impact we know each of them will have into the future.

We joined the Diversity in Agriculture Leadership program in 2018, and women are fulfilling an increasingly vital role at industry level, across supply chain and support industries and, of course, on farms.

In 2022, Cotton Australia formed the Cotton Industry Sustainability Reference Group, an important and select group of experts and leaders to provide input into the industry's sustainability framework, a crucial element in our ongoing viability as an industry. Of the group, there are 20 women and 12 men, with one of our key policy specialists, Jenny Brown leading that group.

This year's Australian Cotton Conference, the first in four years, was well represented by women across all sectors. After the event a survey was conducted with 32% of respondents female and 68% male. Those attending the conference might suggest the percentage of women participants was much higher, as indicated by the fact that 37 of the presenters and forum participants were female.

We are proud to be an organisation with a majority of women on staff. Around 70% of our employees are women, and they contribute in significant and valuable ways. We are proud of the way Cotton Australia's female staff strengthen our organisation and have a major impact across many different aspects of the cotton industry. From liaising with farmers as Regional Managers, to educating and promoting future generations of Australians through our education programs, to managing the Cotton to Market Program - driving the importance of quality Australian cotton to our brand partners/retailers and the supply chain, while assisting our global marketing effort - women are at the forefront at Cotton Australia.

I am pleased to say we have begun exploring our participation in the Reconciliation Action Program and have introduced an Acknowledgement of Country where appropriate. We are also sponsoring Jackie Bennet, a Kamilaroi/Bigambul woman in her efforts in early education through the Connecting the Dots through Culture program.

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While we have made some progress, we admit there is more to be done to enhance the role women play in our organisation and industry. We remain committed to those efforts and are optimistic that more women will assume leadership roles in the industry and beyond.

Adam Kay

CEO, Cotton Australia

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