

SECTION 1
OVERVIEW

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Cotton Centre an industry education process

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At the 2008 Australian Cotton Conference, great emphasis was placed on the importance of continuing to improve the general public's perception of the cotton industry in order for the industry to grow and develop to its potential. This involves continual efforts to educate at all levels of the community from children through to adults and community leaders.

The Australian Cotton Centre has been an integral part of this process for the past six years, and represents an independent facility through which the cotton industry can be promoted by all stakeholders.

Approximately 10,000 people visit the Australian Cotton Centre each year including a mix of school groups, vocational education groups, families, coach groups and independent travelers from across Australia. The feedback from these visitors is overwhelmingly positive.

Of the surveys completed by visitors, more than 98 per cent indicated that their perceptions of the cotton industry were improved after touring the exhibit. Some of the comments regarding the cotton industry after visiting the Centre include:



The centrepiece of the exhibition floor is the Case IH cotton picker.

- “...I now know how important it actually is”
- “...much more respect”
- “...supportive of the cotton grower”
- “...cotton industry is very water friendly”
- “...they seem more responsible than I had at first thought”

Student education

Student education remains a primary focus of the Cotton Centre. In conjunction with Cotton Australia, comprehensive educational packages have been developed in line with school curriculums utilising the resources at the Centre to promote the cotton industry. The Cotton Centre also represents the industry at various educational forums involving interactive activities designed to illustrate the sustainable management practices adopted by the industry.

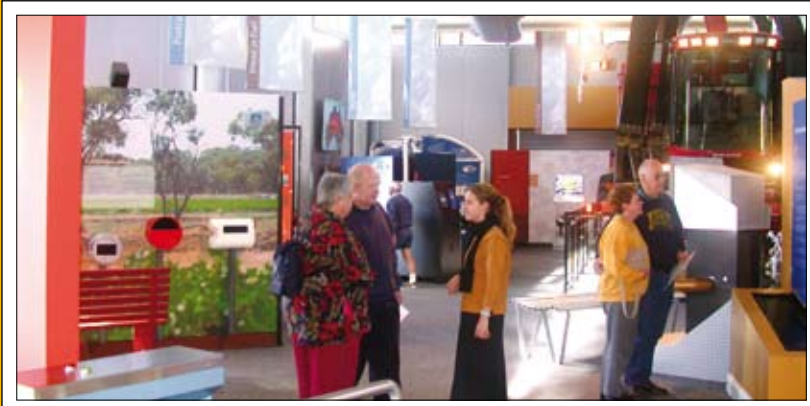
The exhibits at the Australian Cotton Centre were designed by Questacon, famous for their involvement at the Powerhouse Museum in Sydney and the Discovery Centre in Canberra. They are interactive and follow the story of cotton from a tiny seed to the myriad of products produced by the cotton boll.

The centrepiece of the exhibition floor is the Case IH cotton picker, a perennial favourite with children and adults alike. The major issues of water management, pest control and gene technology are all addressed, with the sustainability and environmental stewardship aspects of the industry emphasised. Staff members are pro-active in promoting the industry and rectifying the common misconceptions propagated in the general media. The gift shop especially promotes Australian cotton products.

The opportunity exists to further develop the role of the Australian Cotton Centre as part of the overall plan to promote the cotton industry within the wider community. The Board of Directors welcomes input regarding the direction of this important industry representative.



Education needs to be targeted to all age groups.



Staff members are proactive in promoting the industry.