

Sharing our story one click at a time

■ By Adam Kay – CEO, Cotton Australia

YOU do not have to look too far these days to see how technology has infused itself in our lives. From mobile banking on our smart phones to notifications pinging and blinking for attention, we are an increasingly connected world – a world where information flows at breakneck speed.

For anyone tuned in to the heated debate around water management and cotton over the past year, they would have seen how much of the conversation played out on social media and how those hubs of debate shaped public opinion on the issue – whether guided by accurate information or not.

From the palms of our hands, we can share our perspectives on issues with thousands of people via social media feeds. No longer are journalists the sole gatekeepers of publicly disseminated information that has been verified for accuracy and balance. These days, anyone with something to say can say it to a broad audience, no matter if it is accurate or not.

That presents an inherent problem for our society, not just for a particular industry that is being attacked. How do people know what information is accurate? How do they know if they can trust something they have seen swirling around the comments section of a Facebook post?

At Cotton Australia, we recognised the need to ensure we had a central source of truth about our industry. At the height of the debate last year, too many people were attacking our industry with inaccurate, misconstrued information that needed to be rebutted. We recognised that we needed to do more to inform the general public about Aussie cotton, open our doors and provide the answers to the questions or concerns the community had about our industry.

That is why in early 2020, I was proud to launch our new, improved Cotton Australia website – cottonaustralia.com.au.

The website is the new, central hub of information about our industry – the digital ‘village green’ for people gathering online to learn about Aussie cotton.

We want to educate the public about our industry, which is why through this website we are providing the information needed to boost understanding and dispel myths about Aussie cotton.

I would like to detail for you some of the key enhancements and features of our new Cotton Australia website:

Comprehensively updated information

We want to ensure that anyone who wants to learn about our industry, or visits our website, will be provided with the most up-to-date information about Aussie cotton. Our team has gone



Adam Kay.

through every page with a fine-tooth comb to ensure the latest information is displayed. I particularly recommend people explore the Learn About Cotton tab of the website and read through all the dedicated topic pages we have developed. For our growers, we have a dedicated section that provides the latest information targeted at them, and for teachers, we have a comprehensive Cotton Classroom section providing engaging educational resources.

New pages added

In response to key public concerns, we have identified the information areas our old website was lacking in, and then researched and created new pages to fulfil that need. For example, I recommend people visit the Water Information and Resources, the Myth Buster, and the Hemp pages to learn more about those topics.

Easier navigation

We want people to easily discover information about our industry, which is why we overhauled the website's navigation and re-organised the information pages. Information about Cotton Australia and our work can be found in the About CA section, comprehensive information about industry topics can be found under the Learn About Cotton tab, while grower information is categorised under the Growers tab and resources for teachers is found in the Cotton Classroom section.

As mentioned above, we live in a world on the move – where people expect to have access to important information at their fingertips. To cater for those who want to access information on the go, the new website is optimised for mobile devices, meaning you can discover Aussie cotton anywhere, anytime in an easy way.

I encourage everyone to logon to cottonaustralia.com.au today to discover Aussie cotton. Share the website with your family and friends, and together as an industry we can continue to correct the misinformation circulating about cotton and earn back the trust of sections of the community.

Cotton Australia is acutely aware that a new website alone will not be enough to educate all those who are quizzical or have concerns about our industry. That is why, as an organisation, we have a multi-pronged approach to this important work where we will continue meeting people, holding events, sharing stories about our industry in the media and engaging in social media conversations in an effort to educate about Aussie cotton. We hope to reach as many people as we can in sharing our story and educating about our industry, with the aim that we can inject facts and balance into the discussion about cotton and the issues that affect us.

With 2020 now underway, I hope all in our industry have a better year than last, and that even more rain will soon fall and inject new life into our drought-affected communities. I very much look forward to working with you all this year, and I strongly encourage you to visit cottonaustralia.com.au today to discover our industry's new resource.