



Report

Future Cotton Leader Travel Bursary

June – September 2007

The Cotton Research and Development Corporation has made available up to \$1000 for travel to support your Future Cotton Leader project. The guidelines stipulate that once approved, you can the make your own arrangements for travel. **Within one week of your travel** please send a Tax Invoice with copies of your expenses in line with the amount approved to Helen Dugdale, CRDC, PO Box 282, Narrabri NSW 2390 Telephone: (02) 6792 4088. Up to \$1000 will then be reimbursed. Also include a one page report of your travel including benefits to you, enterprise, industry and whether you would recommend this activity / event to others. Use this report format. Please email a copy of your report to jo@ruralscope.com for feedback prior to sending to Helen at CRDC.

PART A: PERSONAL DETAILS

Name:

Sandy Young

Phone:

(w) 0267 926393 (m) 0412 495544

Email:

sandy@australiancottoncentre.com.au

PART B: YOUR TRAVEL

1. Provide a short overview of what your bursary achieved. (Include name / aims of travel / course. Location of travel etc)

The travel bursary provided by CRDC made possible my study tour of Canberra's – CSIRO Discovery Centre and Questacon to meet with key marketing personnel at both Center's to investigate their marketing strategies used to attract school groups from outside their region. These people included, Stephen Speer, Special Projects Manager and Christine Cansfield – Smith, Director for CSIRO Discovery. Michelle Canning, Manager for Strategic Events & Media, Education and Strategic Communications and Sally DiAddio, Exhibition Manager for Questacon.

In addition, I met with Garry Watson, the National Capitals Educational and Tourism Project Manager who works on behalf of tourist attractions and cultural institutions in the Nationals Capital in developing strategies to get schools to visit Canberra from Australia wide.

I also enjoyed joining in with guided tours of school groups at the CSIRO Discovery Centre & Questacon, gaining first hand resources to directly use in marketing to and with school groups at the Australian Cotton Centre and also making the most of many networking opportunities.

PART C: KEY LEARNINGS

2a. What are two or three key things that you learned through your travel bursary?

There were many benefits and learning experiences I gained from the study tour. By meeting with marketing personnel, I was able to better understand:

- That targeting school or education groups was more than just targeting teachers. Coach companies are the ones who usually put together the itineraries for schools. It is essential to identify and market to these companies initially and then increase the awareness of the ACC to schools / teachers of our education facility.
- The demographic area to primarily target. Queensland comprised of 20% of the schools who visited Canberra in 2006. Of this a large proportion travels through Narrabri on route to Canberra. It is important now that the ACC identify this market and provide the means to attract this market into stopping in Narrabri to visit the ACC and other attractions of the Shire.
- Valuable marketing information and increased confidence in developing relationships for business contacts. For Example By meeting with Garry Watson I know have the ability to liaise with him on future marketing strategies and for the Australian Cotton Centre to be include in the quarterly newsletters distributed by Canberra’s attractions.

2b. Is there anything you would improve to gain more from this bursary?

It may have been worthwhile to spend an extra day traveling onto Shearers Outback in Hay to meet with another agricultural educational facility, that is not based in Canberra to compare their marketing strategies. As most schools are attracted directly to Canberra for its diverse range of educational attractions and government subsidies this may have developed a greater comparison and ideas to help target my specific market.

PART D: BENEFITS

3. What benefits have you achieved from your travel bursary?

For you	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased confidence in marketing and networking • Practice of communication styles with different types of leaders in their field
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An increased enthusiasm to use my newfound knowledge and skills and stretch my abilities.
For your project, enterprise or job	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liaised and gained key industry contacts • Seen inside and gathered first hand resources used and activities undertaken to attract school groups by two of Australia’s leading educational facilities • Increased understanding of marketing and the conducting and structure of promotional campaigns • Understanding of the demographics of students • Understanding of bus/coach companies and why they are not stopping in Narrabri • Gathered valuable resources that could be used at the Australian Cotton Centre and/or used directly in my Future Cotton Leaders Project in promoting the ACC to teachers • Already I have gained one bus companies interest that I met with in Canberra, who asked me to compile a full proposal for a 2-4 day agriculture tour of the Narrabri district with the main focus being Cotton.
For the cotton industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ways to better market the ACC as a leading educational facility for the Cotton Industry ▪ By increasing the awareness of the Australian Cotton Centre and increasing numbers we stand to educate more Australian and International Visitors on the Australian Cotton Industry.

PART E: RECOMMENDATION

4. Would you recommend this travel to others? Why / Why not?

I would recommend this travel to others looking to target educational groups. There is quite a competitive market out there for organisations targeting educators planning off-campus activities with school children. With a clearer understanding of marketing strategies and structure of targeting specific regions gained by leaders in this field (Questacon and the Discovery Centre) you would be in a much better position to plan, organise and implement a promotional campaign to a specific area.