

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

Mungindi Study Tour

This is a custom made study tour designed around travelling to Mungindi to meet with my Mentor Joanne Grainger.

I travelled with my wife Beth to Moree to visit one of Auscott's Farm Managers, Justin Ramsay. Many staff related topics were covered but we focused on the use of Lateral Move irrigators to explore savings in labour and water. Justin had installed 600 Ha of lateral move irrigation and was a valuable source of information.

On Sunday we headed off to Mungindi to stay with Jon and Joanne Grainger to look at their cotton enterprise and work through the third session of my mentor match. The Graingers took us on an extensive tour of their property while discussing their experiences with staff and explaining their current employment program. We were also given time to speak with their farm manager to discuss the other side of recruiting and retaining a manager. Jon and Joanne have a lot of experience with leasing property in partnership with another party, which was also very interesting for our enterprise.

Monday morning we went across to Ralph and Barb Grey's property to discuss their innovative approach of recruiting South Africans on the basis of personality and attitude rather than skills based.

On Monday afternoon we met with Greg and Jan Hamilton and explored the idea of recruiting staff through the matching of results from a personality assessment. Greg and Jan also had experience with family partnerships and cotton farming and the importance of mapping things out in black and white, which we found very interesting.

PART C: KEY LEARNINGS

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

1. There are many different styles to recruiting and retaining staff and I think it is useful to listen and learn from these styles to develop my recruiting and retention program. The three enterprises I visited in Mungindi had very different styles of recruitment and retention. These varied from a more traditional approach of word of mouth employment, to a very intensive recruiting drive sourcing people from other countries to strenuous personality selection at the interview stage.

2. Identify your staff as an asset in your business rather than a cost.

This was very apparent from the visit to Ralph and Barb Grey's property. They went from hiring anyone who was available to totally restructuring their recruitment plan

and hiring on attitude rather than skills. They were convinced that it was easier to train someone the skills of farming than trying to change someone's attitude.

3. Keep the wife happy.

As funny as it may sound, this was a very common theme in all of the properties we visited. The basis of it was, that as long as the living conditions and work lifestyle balance were maintained at a good level, this would minimise extra pressure on the manager at home.

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

No, it was great.

PART D: BENEFITS

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

For you	Staff retention and recruitment knowledge from a range of experienced employers. Innovative ways to recruit and retain staff. An in depth discussion on interview techniques and the value of personality matching. I got to look at different farms in a different region. I was able to discuss two different partnership situations and the challenges involved with these partnerships. I got to meet new cotton farmers in a different region who were prepared to share their experience as farmers, employers and the challenges these both provide.
For your	I will be able to draw on this experience when employing people in

project, enterprise or job	my business. My project evolved around this study tour.
For the cotton industry	<p>I have created contacts and personal connections within the cotton industry that I think I could quite comfortably call on in the future.</p> <p>Members of the cotton industry are encouraged to see a young farmer prepared to travel 1600 Kms to draw on their experience.</p> <p>I have provided exposure of the Future Cotton Leaders program in action.</p> <p>I have gained experience and information that I am willing to pass on to other members of the industry.</p> <p>My personal and leadership skills have certainly been challenged and improved as part of this study tour.</p>

PART E: RECOMMENDATION

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

I would definitely recommend this style of custom study tour to anyone. I was very lucky to have Joanne Grainger as a mentor to centre this tour around, because she put a lot of thought into who would be good people to meet. I was very lucky in this respect as all of the visits seem to be highlights on the tour.