

CSD commences work on \$41m redevelopment

COTTON Seed Distributors (CSD) has commenced site work on the \$41 million development of its 'Shenstone' cotton seed processing plant and laboratory, near Wee Waa.

Having received approval for their development application from the Narrabri Shire Council and the Joint Regional Planning Panel late last year, contracts have since been signed with construction company Richard Crookes Constructions, who commenced site works on January 3, 2017. Richard Crookes Constructions has a regional office in Tamworth.

With the cotton industry continuing to expand into new regions, the planting window widening in many areas and interest in dryland cotton increasing each season, CSD are planning for a future of potentially supplying large volumes of planting seed on short notice.

CSD Managing Director, Peter Graham, said while CSD's existing equipment and infrastructure are adequately meeting current demand, there is significant responsibility to expand capacity, in order to meet the requirements of a progressive cotton industry.

"CSD is the only supplier of cotton seed in Australia, so the industry is reliant on us to ensure that we have the capacity to fulfil the increasing demand for seed.

"As with many agricultural inputs, the demand for cotton seed fluctuates from season to season depending on rainfall, water supply and commodity prices. We need to be ready to support the industry through the next 30 years, at least."

Taking into account CSD's long term agreements and

partnerships with CSIRO and other key technology providers, as well as the exacting processing requirements of modern cotton cultivars, the redevelopment will include a world class processing plant, new laboratory and office complex.

"In addition to the \$41 million construction investment, work is currently underway to finalise the plant and equipment infrastructure, which will require further sizeable investment by CSD over the next 12 months. This equipment will be sourced locally, as well as from France and the USA." said Peter.

The redevelopment is set to bring a significant economic boost to the Wee Waa community, as the Narrabri shire's largest ever non-mining development. Up to 100 people are expected to be engaged in the work at its peak, injecting a significant influx of money into the local economy.

The redevelopment signals a move into a new era at CSD, with the company set to celebrate its 50th anniversary in April.

The new plant is expected to be fully operational for the 2018 processing season.



Hill Lockhart Architects' impression of the completed Cotton Seed Distributors redevelopment. At the back of the complex are the existing buildings.



Earthworks underway as of January, 2017.



On site to commence earthworks are (L-R): Tony Wealand, Site Manager, Richard Crookes Constructions; Tony Meppem, Director of Development and Economic Growth, Narrabri Shire Council; James Kahl, Chairman, Cotton Seed Distributors; Philip Armytage, General Manager, Development and Communications, Cotton Seed Distributors; Cr Cathy Redding, Mayor, Narrabri Shire Council; Peter Graham, Managing Director, Cotton Seed Distributors.