

2018 Australian Cotton Industry Awards finalists announced

COTTON growers, researchers and industry members from cotton-growing regions across NSW and Queensland are among the finalists for this year's Australian Cotton Industry Awards.

Cotton Australia CEO Adam Kay says the finalists were selected based on their contributions to the cotton industry across a wide range of areas, including farming best practice, research and development, innovation, leadership and industry advocacy.

The finalists

Monsanto Grower of the Year and AgriRisk High Achiever of the Year

- Glen and Narelle Whittaker, GS & NM Whittaker – 'Wingfield', Warren.
- Bernie Bierhoff for Avondale Ag – 'Avondale', Rowena.
- Peter Lennox for Morcott Pty Ltd – 'Battery Hill', Gunnedah.
- Brett Corish, Corish Management Pty Ltd – 'Mundine', Goondiwindi.
- Greg and Maryann Bender, Burradoo Enterprises Pty Ltd – 'Burradoo Plains' Chinchilla.

ADAMA Chris Lehmann Trust Young Cotton Achiever of the Year

- Sam Simons, Agromax Consulting – Gunnedah.
- William Back, Auscott Ltd (Namo Valley) – Narrabri.
- Jake Cutcliffe, Auscott Ltd (Gwydir Valley) – Moree.

Cotton Seed Distributors Researcher of the Year

- Robert Eveleigh (formerly Cotton Seed Distributors Ltd) – Wee Waa.
- Dr Joseph Foley, Dr Malcolm Gillies and Dr Alison McCarthy, University of Southern Queensland – Toowoomba.
- Dr Kristen Knight, Monsanto – Toowoomba.

Adam says each of the finalists had made outstanding contributions to the industry, and deserved recognition.

"The nominees for this year's Awards program are of a very high standard," Adam says.

"This group represents the strengths of our industry – innovation, dedication, the sharing of ideas and the drive to figure out a way to do things better. Without people such as these, the cotton industry would not be where it is today.

"The annual Awards program is important to our industry because it allows us to recognise excellence and hard work, foster future growth and improvement across the industry," Adam says.

The Awards judging panel has travelled to the finalists' originating regions to meet and assess each of the candidates.

Cash prizes are on offer for the winners across all categories, with an additional research bursary for Researcher of the Year.

The recipients for the 2018 Australian Cotton Industry Awards will be announced at a gala event to be held on the Gold Coast on August 9. It is held in conjunction with the 2018 Australian Cotton Conference.

For more information on the Awards, go to:
<http://www.australiancottonawards.com/>

2018 Australian Cotton Industry Awards finalists

Monsanto Grower of the Year and AgriRisk High Achiever of the Year finalists

Bernie Bierhoff for Avondale Ag, 'Avondale' Rowena



Having managed Avondale Ag for more than a decade, Bernie Bierhoff knows his way around a cotton farm. A family owned and run business, Avondale Ag is fully irrigated with flood irrigation on its irrigation country. The procedures Bernie has put into place on the property ensure that water can be moved around cost effectively and efficiently, which in turn helps the business achieve consistent yields. Bernie is actively involved in his local community, is in the thick of fundraising efforts for the local school through Avondale Ag, as well as working closely with the Walgett Cotton Growers' Association. Bernie is committed to farming for the future, and looking after the soils for the next generation.

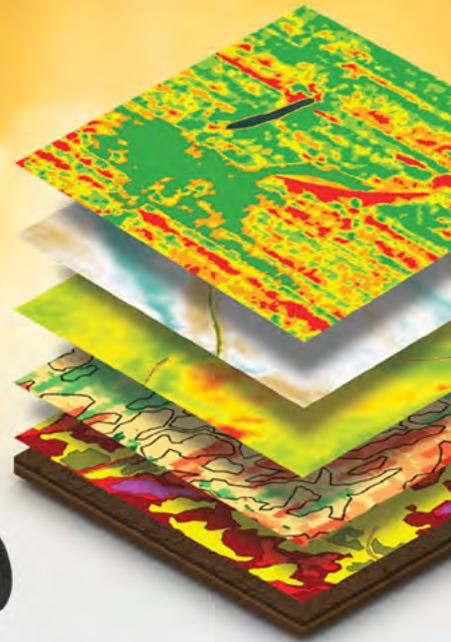
Greg and Maryann Bender, Burradoo Enterprises Pty Ltd, 'Burradoo Plains' Chinchilla



Greg and Maryann Bender run Burradoo Enterprises Pty Ltd, just out of Chinchilla. Their area to cotton for the 2016–17 season was 300 hectares, of which 240 is irrigated and the balance dryland. Greg and Maryann's operation is unique as



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most of their water is coal seam gas water, and the delivery of the water is complex as it is being pumped four times before it reaches its final point. The family-run business employs overseas workers through an international rural farming exchange program, and was the recipient of the Darling Downs Cotton Growers' Association Award for the 2017 cotton season. Greg and Maryann look forward to the future where they may further implement the processes they have already put in place.

Brett Corish, Corish Management Pty Ltd, 'Mundine' Goondiwindi



Brett grew up on a property in Queensland, which he farms today. The property is approximately 10,000 hectares in size, comprised of 2000 hectares of developed country, 2500 hectares of dryland farming and the balance grazing and bushland. Brett planted 800 hectares of fully irrigated cotton for the 2016-2017 season, seeing an average yield of 12.8 bales per hectare. Mundine's water allocation comes solely from the nearby Macintyre River, and it implements several different types of irrigation systems. Brett is passionate about ensuring the business is sustainable moving forward, so that it may be passed on to future generations.

Peter Lennox for Morcott Pty Ltd, 'Battery Hill' Gunnedah



Peter manages 1012 hectares near Gunnedah. In recent years, he has grown approximately 300 hectares of cotton on the property, yielding 10 bales to the hectare. The irrigation on farm is primarily flood, with 78.8 hectares under pivot irrigation. Peter is able to water the entirety of his planted cotton over seven days, getting water to the crop quickly and as it needs it. Over the past couple of years Peter has achieved *myBMP*, and follows strict strategies to productively utilise all infrastructure available.

Glen and Narelle Whittaker, GS & NM Whittaker, 'Wingfield' Warren



Glen runs a cotton operation just outside Warren. He grows 400–600 hectares of cotton each year on the farm, which is fully set up for furrow irrigation. Glen's career has been cotton industry-focused. He is passionate about managing his crops at ground level and planning effectively for the future. He enjoys the constant challenges, as well as the supportive nature of the industry. He has been involved in water politics over the course of his farming career. Glen is driven to improve water efficiency, and is an active, well-known member of his local community.

ADAMA Chris Lehmann Trust Young Cotton Achiever of the Year Finalists

Jake Cutcliffe, Moree



A recipient of the 2017 Gwydir Valley Cotton Growers Association Young Achiever Award, Moree-based agronomist Jake graduated from the University of New England with a Bachelor of Agribusiness (Marketing) and a Post-Graduate Degree in Agriculture (Cotton Production). Currently working for Auscott Ltd Moree, Jake plays an integral role in steering the company's agronomic decisions and implementation in the Gwydir Valley. He strives towards delivering a profitable annual cropping program.

Sam Simons, Gunnedah

Based in the Namoi Valley with Agromax Consulting, Sam has a keen interest in trial work and extension for continual improvement and adoption of new varieties, products, irrigation efficiencies, tailored fertility programs and cutting-edge technology. Sam is also actively involved in an array of industry trials and works directly with growers to improve production performance. He is an active member of Crop Consultants Australia, attending professional development events and

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participating in member projects. Sam is passionate in helping ensure the Australian cotton industry is considered a world-leader in long term sustainability.

William Back, Narrabri



William is an experienced agronomist who has recently taken on the role of manager of Auscott Narrabri's farming operation. He is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the 9000–hectare cotton farm, enjoying the support of Auscott to pursue his desire to be at the forefront of cotton development. William has been involved in various on-farm programs that are making important contributions to the constant improvement and management of cotton, such as running trials in cooperation with other researchers and organisations.

Cotton Seed Distributors Researcher of the Year Award Finalists

Robert Eveleigh, Wee Waa

With a Diploma of Applied Science in Agriculture from Hawkesbury Ag College under his belt, Robert enjoyed a career as an extension and development agronomist with Cotton Seed



Distributors for 20 years. Before that he was a district agronomist with the Department of Agriculture. Robert's passion and dedication to the Australian cotton industry is firm. He is the driving force behind Federation Farm, a not-for-profit community farm using treated effluent water to irrigate cotton along with a variety of other crops. Robert has also acted as a mentor to trainee agronomists with the Department of Agriculture and young extension and development agronomists with CSD.

Dr Kristen Knight, Toowoomba



Having been with Monsanto since 2005, Dr Kristen Knight has been at the head of numerous activities contributing to the cotton industry. She leads Monsanto's ongoing resistance monitoring program, working to develop an understanding of the field performance of Bollgard technologies. Kristen also leads the local development of Bollgard 3, including development and scientific positioning of the Bollgard 3 Resistance Management Plan and collection of regulatory field data for the Bollgard 3 submission. Kristen's work has led to the revised RMP which will continue to protect Australian cotton from the threat of insect resistance.

Dr Joseph Foley, Dr Alison McCarthy and Dr Malcolm Gillies, Toowoomba



The University of Southern Queensland's National Centre for Engineering in Agriculture smart automated irrigation team is made up of Dr Joseph Foley, Dr Allison McCarthy and Dr Malcolm Gillies. The team's most recent work has drawn upon many technological developments in irrigation management, measurement, and control for application in cotton irrigation systems. The team has brought engineering expertise and knowledge to the cotton industry in a number of areas, such as in-field irrigation and water management skills, as well as software and instrumentation development for irrigation improvement.