

# Record applicants for future leaders program

Young people from across the cotton industry are embracing the opportunity to learn about leadership, with a record number applying for the 2024 Australian Future Cotton Leaders Program (AFCLP).

CRDC Innovation Broker Rachel Holloway was part of the selection panel and said with 46 applicants, it was also extremely difficult to choose just 15.

"We would love to accommodate them all, but ultimately we added one more participant for this life-changing opportunity," Rachel said.

"This very diverse mix of participants will go on to take leadership roles, advance their careers, find more career satisfaction and develop connections with fellow participants that last a lifetime."

The 2024 participants are Angus Marshall, CSD E&D agronomist, Katherine NT; Georgie Flick, Pablo Vega agronomist, Goondiwindi Qld; Greg Pearce, Bayer territory business manager, Goondiwindi Qld; Grace Griffiths, agronomist/business owner 101 Ag Pathways, Goondiwindi Qld; Rhys Herbert, farm manager, Warra Qld; Dr Alison McCarthy, UniSQ senior research fellow, Toowoomba Qld; Brendan Murray, Queensland Cotton grower services manager, St George Qld; Jacob Booby, Namoi Cotton account manager Namoi, Narrabri NSW; Kate Lumber, Poole Ag agronomist, Moree NSW; Sam Carberry, cotton grower, Narrabri NSW; George McCalman, cotton grower, Gunnedah NSW; Sarah Vivers, cotton grower, Weemelah, NSW; Hayden Petty, Summit Ag agronomist, Leeton NSW; Angus Whittaker, Customised Farm Management area manager/cotton grower, Darlington Point NSW; Prue Byrnes, cotton grower,

Rowena NSW; and Jack O'Neill, cotton grower, Narrabri NSW.

Held every two years the AFCLP is run and coordinated by Cotton Australia with support from CRDC and facilitation by Jo Eady of Ruralscope. The program has produced 116 graduates since 2006.

"Each year we have been challenged in our selection process because the standard of applicants is incredibly high, and this year was no exception," Cotton Australia CEO Adam Kay said.

Grace Griffiths has a love of agriculture and cotton she is passionate about sharing.

Along with working as an agronomist and office manager in the family business at Goondiwindi (Bigambul country) in South-East Qld where she grew up with irrigated farming, Grace is already demonstrating her leadership potential by promoting cotton and agriculture and highlighting roles and opportunities in the industry.

Her business, 101 Ag Pathways, isn't just about advertising jobs. Grace's passion for sharing the positive and rewarding aspects of living and working in rural Australia stands out. Her social media channels include video interviews, stories and interesting information about people living and working in agriculture. She's really chuffed to see a few Goondiwindi faces in this year's cohort and what it says about the town.

"I think the strong showing from Goondi is testament to the supportive nature of people in the industry here," Grace says.

"What I've learned through my business is that early-career or younger professionals really need the mentorship and support of their peers.

"For me personally, I'm 24, and am increasingly in situations where I'm overseeing others or I need to manage them, and I want to be good at that, to be a good leader who people want to go to work with.

"There is a difference between being a 'boss' and a leader, which no doubt I'm



**Grace Griffiths is a well-known advocate for agriculture and inspiring early-career professionals to come to the bush.**

about to learn about and experience in the best way and I'm really looking forward to it.

"I've heard amazing things about the course and can't wait to learn and then put that to work in my daily work and life."

In 2024, the program will feature face-to-face forums, interactive online discussions, one-on-one coaching and integration with industry activities. Participants also lead a project related to their area of interest. The program concludes with a graduation ceremony at the 2024 Australian Cotton Conference on the Gold Coast (Bundjalung country) in August.

## For more

### Australian Future Cotton Leaders Program

[www.cottonaustralia.com.au/leadership-programs](http://www.cottonaustralia.com.au/leadership-programs)