



Media release

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## Whitton's Southern Cotton named as finalists in six categories at the Murray-Riverina Business Awards

### Cotton industry and ginning growth key to success

In just its third season in operation, Australia's newest ginning facility, [Southern Cotton](#) has been named as finalists in **six categories** at the [2014 Murray-Riverina Business Awards](#) – finalists in **more categories** than any other business from the region:

- Business Leader
- Excellence in Innovation
- Employer of Choice
- Excellence in Business
- Excellence in Work, Health and Safety
- Excellence in Export

Finalists in three categories in 2013, this year's exceptional result is a credit to Southern Cotton's strong management team, skilled staff, excellent customer service, competitive pricing and measurement structures, and grower support, according to General Manager, **Kate O'Callaghan**, finalist in the **Business Leader** category.

"Being recognised in this way means a lot to us at Southern Cotton because we are well aware there is plenty of regional business talent in the Murray-Riverina," Ms O'Callaghan said. "For us, it provides a level of confidence that we are heading in the right direction as an organisation, and making a positive contribution to the **local community**."

For Ms O'Callaghan, also director and agricultural representative on the [Riverina Regional Tourism Board](#), a major mission is to **expand the cotton production** in Southern NSW.

"In 2014, we have **56 growers** ginning at Southern Cotton. By communicating our mission, values and innovative points-of-difference, will we continue to attract new growers to the industry every year, and to Southern Cotton," she said.

**Education and information**, shared through grower meetings and facility tours, has been critical to changing pre-conceived ideas on cotton production, irrigated agriculture and cotton ginning. "The key message is cotton production is a sustainable and efficient alternative for the rotation of many of the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area irrigated farmers – and it is bringing **millions of dollars to the region** each year," Ms O'Callaghan said.



Category winners from the [Murray-Riverina Business Awards](#) will be announced at a Gala Dinner on Friday 15 August at Bagtown Function Centre, Griffith, and will proceed as finalists to the [NSW Business Chamber State Business Awards](#), to be held in Sydney on Friday 28 November 2014.

**Ends**

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## **Facts and figures**

- In its first year in operation, Southern Cotton turned over \$26 million, following the transformation of a subdivided paddock into a state-of-the-art cotton ginning facility.
- In the 2014 season, Southern Cotton has contracted 200,000 bales (with a total average value of \$100 million), up from 166,234 bales in 2012.
- Seed sales out of Southern Cotton have returned an average of \$300 per tonne this year, and returned \$15 million to the region.
- Southern Cotton is one of the only gins in the world using the data out of the cotton picker – and tracing this module through the process to the finished bale- This data includes everything about the cotton module: farmer, property, field, date, time, latitude and longitude of the module's production. By tracing this module number right through the process, production reports can be provided to growers on a per module basis.
- Other award wins include:
  - Excellence in Visitor Services, Work, Health and Safety, Employee of Choice – 2014 Leeton Chamber of Commerce Outstanding Business Awards
  - Excellence in Export – 2013 Leeton Chamber of Commerce Outstanding Business Awards

## **About Southern Cotton**

Australia's newest ginning facility, Southern Cotton was commissioned and built in the 2012 season. The Whitton-based operation features state-of-the-art technology in quality measurement, cleaning, humidification, processing and data traceability. Southern Cotton employs 11 full-time staff and 42 seasonal workers, and achieved Best Management Practice for Cotton Ginning Accreditation in 2013.