

## ACSA STRENGTHENS TIES WITH INDIA & BANGLADESH

by Jules Willis, Australian Cotton Shippers Association

I recently had the privilege of joining ACSA Members Cliff White, Joel Hatherell and Shay Dhareula on an intensive eight-day industry delegation across India and Bangladesh, visiting key textile hubs including Coimbatore, Mumbai and Dhaka.

This strategic visit provided a valuable opportunity to strengthen relationships with key international partners, explore emerging market opportunities and witness firsthand the value and reputation of Australian cotton in the global supply chain.

In India, we met with leading agents, spinning mills and industry associations including Indian Cotton Federation and Southern India Mills' Association. A major highlight was the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with the Cotton Association of India, an important step towards closer collaboration aimed at strengthening trade ties and improving market access for Australian cotton.

We also had the chance to meet with Australian government officials including the Consul-General, the Agriculture Counsellor, and the Trade & Investment Commissioner. These discussions provided important context on broader Australia-India trade relations, India's current economic outlook and the potential implications of the US tariffs. We also explored the dynamics of the local cotton market and the longer-term opportunities for Australian exports into the region.

From there we travelled to Dhaka, Bangladesh, connecting with the Deputy High Commissioner and the Trade & Investment Commissioner, the Bangladesh Cotton Association, the Bangladesh Textile Mills Association and key local agents. As one of the world's fastest-growing textile manufacturing hubs, Bangladesh offers significant potential for expanded trade and partnership.

Visits to spinning mills and garment factories gave us a comprehensive view of the supply chain, from laydowns featuring Australian cotton to manufacturing the finished garments, leaving all of us impressed by the innovation and scale of production.

An Australian Cotton Seminar, hosted by Austrade in Dhaka, brought together local industry leaders and reinforced the strong value proposition of Australian cotton and opportunities for increased trade into the market. The seminar, officially opened by the High Commissioner, HE Ms Susan Ryle, further highlighted the importance of Australia-Bangladesh ties.

Our visit reaffirmed both the unique value and growing demand for Australian cotton, recognised for its superior fibre length, strength, micronaire, grade, reliable classing and zero contamination. Building on the strong interest shown during our engagements, our focus moving forward will be on deepening collaboration, identifying new opportunities for partnership, and supporting increased uptake of Australian cotton.

My sincere thanks to the Austrade teams in India and Bangladesh, their support and coordination played a key role in the success of our visit.

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