

This nifty poster from [Cotton Australia](#) is annotated with the new and existing cotton production areas that would potentially benefit from the Bradfield Scheme.

In the Northern Murray-Darling Basin, cotton is grown mostly in the south in the Darling Downs, St George, through to Bourke and Walgett. It is worth noting that many areas have seen no production this season due to drought.

The [controversial water](#) buybacks in the Condamine-Balonne catchment took place in the St George region. The purchase of almost 30 gigalitres of water was to secure significant environmental benefits for the Lower Balonne, including the Culgoa and the Narran Lakes — a Ramsar-listed wetland of international importance.

Cotton growing areas around Bourke and St George could benefit from additional supply via a Bradfield Scheme, and potential new areas of production around Charters Towers, Muttaborra and Aramac could be opened up to cotton production.

In terms of production, Australian cotton is of consistently high quality, almost zero contamination and offers short shipping times from Australia's ports to Asian markets. Australia is the world's second largest exporter of cotton earning valuable foreign currency. Unlike perishable horticultural crops, cotton is primarily an exported commodity and increased production easily absorbed by the massive world market.

Cotton growers are uniquely positioned to prove the viability of a Bradfield Scheme, as Australian irrigated cotton growers utilize the latest CSIRO agronomic research and development to produce the world highest yields per hectare, have a mature trading market, and efficient production due to massive industrial scale.

The elements of the proposed Bradfield Scheme from Northern Queensland to the Murray-Darling Basin are as follows (elevations also indicated):

- Blue dots - major Bradfield components
- Red dots - new irrigation areas
- Light blue lines - approximate routes of gravity-fed aqueducts
- Orange line - pumped section

The main water sources are flood flows stored at Hells Gate Dam on the Burdekin River, with potential for more supply from further north on the Herbert and Tully Rivers.

The new irrigation area in the Charters Towers area (red dot) is supplied with water from the aqueduct (light blue line).

Water is stored on the Great Dividing Range low point at 300m at Lake Galilee.

From Lake Galilee water is transported by aqueduct to a new irrigation area in the Mitchell Downs in the vicinity of Muttaborra and Aramac. A second aqueduct transports water to storage at Blackall at elevation 250m.

From Blackall water can be pumped over the Great Dividing Range (using solar power) at elevation 320m and conveyed via gravitational aqueduct to Charleville at 300m and St George at 240m. Now in the Murray-Darling Catchment, the water could be used for environmental purposes and sold on to irrigators.

A second gravitational aqueduct could convey water through the Bulloo River catchment to the cotton production areas around Bourke at 110m.

*Hat tip to Jason for the proposed route to Bourke and St George.*