

Minutes // 2023 RGA Branch Annual General Meeting

Deniliquin, Hay & Victoria Combined Branches

Deniliquin RSL

7th June 2023

Meeting opened: 7:30am

Chair: Antony Vagg

Attendees:

Ian Mason, John Fowler, Di Morona, Nic Morona, Monica Morona, Daryl Gibbs, Martin van der Sluys, Lachlan Bull, Andrew Crossley, Steve Fawns, Linda Fawns, Martin Morona, Kevin Warren, Kellie Crossley, Laura Reynard, Dominic Garden, Melissa De Bortoli, Julian Zanatta, Georgina Pengilley, Christopher Proud, Pip Connolly, Peter Herrmann, Neil Bull, Graeme Kruger

Apologies:

Laurie Arthur, John Bradford, Jeremy Morton, Leigh Vial, Josh Small, Jeff Champlin, Duncan Fraser, Andrew Bomm, Dom Morona, Tom Holschier, Russell Tait, Vicky Meyer, Craig Anderson

Minutes from previous meeting

Moved: Nic Morona; Seconded: Daryl Gibbs

Business arising from the minutes

Daryl Gibbs asked for an update on the motion of looking into why rice production has decreased so much in the Hay

Julian – Changing price of water, growers moving to cotton. Grower services are going to talk to growers in the region. In pipeline with grower services.

Members requested they spread up the process.

Lachlan Bull – People have felt let down by grower services. Isolated.

Deniliquin Branch President: Ant Vagg

The 2023 season was very challenging, yet a rewarding season. Those who were able to get rice in should be congratulated.

If people are to continue to include rice in their farming businesses, rice need needs to continue to hold and lift.

Hay Branch President: Di Morona

Due to the flooding, she couldn't get grain in the ground. Hopeful for a more promising season next year. Di will be standing down from the position of branch president after quite a few years. Di gave thanks to the RGA staff, board & Central Executive. Thanks to presidents, Rob Massina & Peter Herrmann. Staff very dedicated and hard working.

Thanking the members. The RGA is not just about rice, it's the entire business. Di said need to get the word out better to encourage more members

Deniliquin Branch President: Martin van der Sluys

Martin thanked members present and staff. Although the season was not favourable, Martin was able to get rice in. He thanks AGS for the smooth turn arounds at Deniliquin Mill and increasing the moisture limit.

RGA President Peter Herrmann

Mr Herrmann provided his RGA Presidents report, speaking about the following.

- Welcomed branch members, staff, and board of SunRice and the RGA to the meeting and thank everyone for their participation in the RGA.
- Introduced himself and discussed his recent trips to the area.
- Thanked RGA members, delegate and staff
- Peter Herrmann gave update of his rice harvest
- He reiterated the importance of the RGA especially when it comes to vesting. and gave an update on the RGA's work in the past year and what is arising in the next few months. A lot of work has been done behind the scenes particularly in the area of Water Policy. He highlighted the importance of having relationships and maintaining access to politicians and their offices. The RGA is against buybacks and continues to advocate for Growers in this space.
- Encouraged members to speak up if there are issues that concern them. The RGA welcomes their feedback.
- The year RGA received funding from AgriFutures for a Capacity Building, focusing on our next generation of leaders and our current leaders, supporting growers with change readiness, a series of workshops focusing on key industry topics. The reintroduction of the Rice industry Graduate Program. Under the program they have held a Women in Rice Forum. Over the coming 6 months keep an eye for workshops focusing on the RD&E strategy, WH&S, Farm Business Finance, Next Generation Leadership program and our Established leaders program.
- The 2023 Australian Rice Growers' Conference will be held in Griffith. Tickets are now on sale. He encouraged people.

Branch Elections

Antony Vagg declared all positions vacant and handed over to Peter Herrmann to conduct the elections:

Deniliquin Elections

Moved as a block by Di Morona, seconded Lachlan Bull

- President Antony Vagg
- Vice-President Josh Small
- Secretary (Vacant)
- Central Executive Delegates Antony Vagg, Kellie Crossley
- Central Executive Alternates Lachlan Bull, John Bradford, Josh Small, Linda Fawns, Chris Liphuyzen
- Seed Committee Andrew Hicks (Delegate), Linda Fawns (Alternate)

Victoria Elections

Moved as a block by Antony Vagg, seconded Peter Herrmann

- President Martin van der Sluys
- Central Executive Delegate Martin van der Sluys

Hay Elections

Moved as a block by Antony Vagg, seconded Lachlan Bull

- President Monica Morona
- Vice-President Diane Morona
- Secretary Daryl Gibbs
- Central Executive Delegate Monica Morona
- Central Executive Alternate Diane Morona
- Seed Committee Nic Morona

Peter Herrmann handed over to Antony Vagg as the re-elected Branch President.
Graeme

SunRice Update

Mr Laurie Arthur, SunRice Chairman sends his apologies. As the Chair of Grower Services Julian Zanatta provided the following update:

- Apologies from Laurie as he is the Solomon Islands on business
- Final pool price for CY22 will be released in July, it is currently under board review.
- UK free trade agreement was live last week which will increase the customer pool
- Vesting, SunRice is aligned with the RGA's views
- CEO Rob Gordon is retiring at SunRice AGM, new CEO Paul Serra will be shadowing Rob Gordon for a period of time.
- The 2023 AM will be held at Leeton. AGMs will alternate location in the coming years.

Discussion about how the new CEO will meet growers, it was suggested they should use the AGM forum to get suggestions on how to meet, eg. Shed meetings.

Questions asked about the CY23 pool price range. Price is currently with the auditors.

Rice Marketing Board (RMB)

- Melissa De Bortoli delivered the report on behalf of Scott Glyde
- Board is seeking EOI from consultants on the verification on SunRice's calculations in the vesting report
- Currently finalising the negotiation of the SEEL with SunRice. New license should be finalised in coming weeks.
- Board is in regular contact with DPI NSW about ABARES report and will be meeting with Ministers.

Rice Breeding Australia (RBA)

- RBA was established in June 2022 to transition breeding from NSW DPI. Is a company set up by SunRice, RGA and AgriFutures.

- Dr Chris Proud as RBA's breeder RBA has 6 staff that were part of the previous breeding program and selected based on their skills
- RBA is working on the water productivity target set by industry through the strategic plan
- RBA is focused on cold tolerance to provide yield stability to rice growers as well as lodging, maturity and aerobic adaptation
- RBA is working closely with SunRice to ensure that we are focusing on the correct quality classes for the next 10-15 years
- RBA has established offices and seed processing and storage facility at Brady Way in Leeton. RBA is working at the NSW DPI glasshouse facilities for another 2 years until a new facility can be built that is fit for purpose
- RBA has established 5 year agreement with Knagge family just outside Leeton as a homesite. RBA will be conducting trials across the region to ensure varieties are well adapted
- RBA is working on fast tracking new varieties from the old program, new back crossing program and crossing to ensure delivery to rice growers
- RBA has made some small changes that has seen delivery of varieties from the start of the process reduced by 5 years and doubling of glasshouse capacity with the simple switch of a tray size
- RBA is present at the Rice Management Committee RBA welcomes transparency, questions and the opportunity for growers to come and see what they do. RBA is operating with a commercial mindset and maximizing return to growers on the levy dollars
The new breeding program has been able to double the number of plots in the existing greenhouses.

Voice of the Levy Payer Update

- Highlighted the importance of feedback to the program through the VOLP project.
- Neil touched on the new Capacity Building Project
- The VOLP Increase in levy. Want grower input in levy funds
- Neil echoed RBA, welcoming feedback
- Explained the different areas of work under the AgriFutures Rice RD&E Program, Rice Breeding, Rice Extension, Capacity Building Program, Agronomy, and the VOLP.
- Feedback is welcomed in all forms – online, phone calls, meetings, drainage meetings.
- There has been consistent feedback on research objectives.
- Response of the feedback will be shared. It is a closed loop program.

Rabobank

Rabobank are excited to partner with the RGA again. Laura is from the Echuca branch which is in the Riverina and northern Victoria region which has Seven branches. Introduced herself and branch, currently an analyst soon to be a manager. In March this year Rabo held Farm to Fork in Sydney which had 1,000 clients. International and national speakers. Regionally, Rabo has many events coming up. Laura encourage RGA members to attend. Laura will share event details with RGA, who will on share with members.

General Business

Graeme Kruger gave update on water advocacy on behalf of the RGA Water Policy Manager and spoke about the recent announcement about the MIL budget shortfall.

MOTION

The RGA Hay, Victoria Deniliquin Branches seek clarification on the press release and policy change from MIL in regards to the \$7 million shortfall and whether this is ongoing as this is leading to increased uncertainty with their customers.

Moved Lachlan Bull Seconded Dom Garden

CARRIED

The rice industry continues to look into the reasons why the Hay district rice production has been in decline, with special emphasis on shed management, cartage subsidy, the relationship with other industries and other factors.

Moved: Daryl Gibs Seconder: Monica Morona

CARRIED

The RGA Hay, Victoria Deniliquin Branches would like to thank to Rob Gordon for his time and service to the rice industry.

Moved: Antony Vagg Seconded Di Morona

CARRIED

Meeting closed: 9:05am

