

Minutes // 2023 RGA Branch Annual General Meeting

Coleambally Branch

Coleambally Community Club

6th June 2023

Meeting opened: 8:20am

Chair: Justin Sutherland

Attendees: Justin Sutherland, Denise Kelly, Ian Mason, David Brain, Maddy Dunbar, Mitch Dunbar, Peter Sheppard Ian Kelly, Alex Fraser, Scott Perkins, Lachlan Kelly, Gary Wiseman. Melissa De Bortoli, Julian Zanatta, Georgina Pengilley, Christopher Proud, Carmel Cristofaro, Pip Connolly, Peter Herrmann, Neil Bull, Graeme Kruger

Apologies:

Laurie Arthur, John Bradford, Jeremy Morton, Leigh Vial, Ian Sutherland David Lashbrook, Nancy Lashbrook, Tonetta Brain, Linda Christesen, Clement Whelan, Dorothy Whelan, William Taylor, John Pound

Minutes from previous meeting

Moved: David Brain Seconded: Peter Sheppard

Business arising from the minutes

Nil

Branch President: Justin Sutherland

Justin welcomed members and guests to the meeting. He thanked the Club for hosting. He gave an update on his season. Highlighted the important work the RGA is doing in the water policy area. They are playing the long game

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

Justin Sutherland declared all positions vacant and handed over to Peter Herrmann to conduct the elections:

- President:** Justin Sutherland
Nominated: Peter Sheppard Seconded: Denise Kelly
- Vice President:** Alex Fraser
Nominated: Denise Kelly Seconded: Justin Sutherland
- Secretary:** Maddy Dunbar
Nominated: Justin Sutherland Seconded: Mitch Dunbar
- Central Executive:** Justin Sutherland, Maddy Dunbar
Nominated: Denise Kelly Seconded: Mitch Dunbar
- CE Alternate:** Alex Fraser, Andrew O'Connor, Denise Kelly, Mitch Dunbar
Nominated: Justin Sutherland Seconded: Peter Sheppard
- Seed Committee:** David Lashbrook (Delegate) Peter Sheppard (alternate)
Nominated: Justin Sutherland Seconded: Mitch Dunbar

Peter Herrmann handed over to Justin Sutherland as the re-elected Branch President. Justin took the Chair and thanked everyone for re-electing him.

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.

Discussed paddy vision and the scores growers received. Issues were raised with the amount of time the paddy vision test takes.

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.

General Business

MOTION:

The Coleambally Branch does not support further buybacks of water without acknowledging the agreed socioeconomic criteria.

Moved: Denise Kelly Second: David Brain

CARRIED

Coleambally ask RGA to create a fact sheet outlining the RGA's role and the structure of the rice industry including SunRice & RMB.

Moved: David Brain Second: Alex Fraser

CARRIED

Coleambally would like to thank Rob Gordon for all the work he has done for SunRice and the rice industry and wish him well in the future.

Moved: David Brain Seconded: Denise Kelly

CARRIED

Meeting closed: 10:15am