

Minutes // 2023 RGA Branch Annual General Meeting

Yanco Branch

Historic Hydro Leeton

5th June 2023

Meeting opened: 7:33am

Chair: Scott Williams

Attendees: Scott Williams, Garry Kirkup, Gillian Kirkup, Garry Knagge, Ian Dahlenburg, Morris Walsh, Greg Brown, David Pike, Julian Zanatta, Georgina Pengilley, Christopher Proud, Carmel Cristofaro, Pip Connolly, Peter Herrmann, Neil Bull

Apologies:

Laurie Arthur, John Bradford, Jeremy Morton, Llanelle Forrester, Janelle Sullivan, Peter Draper, Erin Draper, Judy Dahlenburg,

Minutes from previous meeting

Moved: Garry Knagge; Seconded; Ian Dahlenburg

Business arising from the minutes

Nothing raised.

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.
- Peter Herrmann reflected on his CY23 harvest which has been favourable
- 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.
- Update on vesting. While it is assumed DPI will continue to suggest the removal of vesting. The RGA will continue to advocate for vesting as maintaining vesting aligns with the vast majority of RGA members.
- In January 2023 – the RGA was successful in securing funding through an open call process with AgriFutures, the funding secured will roll out a series of workshops over the next 4 years. These programs will focus 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 – we are currently recruiting 2 graduates to work across the rice industry for a 12 month period. This is a great opportunity to for the rice industry to

- To date the program has rolled out a women in rice event back in March – this event saw a group of females growers head to Melbourne to meet with industry experts, learn from each other, meet with Women on Boards focusing on board development. 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. Applications for the Graduate Program have just opened and will close on the 7th of July – if you have family members or friends nearing the completion on a University degree who might be interested in this opportunity we encourage you direct them to the RGA website for further information.
- Fuel Tax Credit had – RGA involvement.
- The 2023 Australian Rice Growers' Conference will be held in Griffith
- Rabobank is back as partner to the RGA.
- RGA is continuing to work with SunRice where there is overlap in our organisations.
- Rice Research Management Committee is working well.
- Industry is aligned on vesting. RGA has had many meetings with politicians regarding this.

Branch President: Scott Williams

Nominations of honorary Councillors can go directly to the branch president given some potential candidates are present in the meeting today.

SunRice Update

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

- Final pool price will be released...
- UK free trade agreement was live last week which will give increase customers.
- Vesting, SunRice is aligned with the RGA's views
- CY23 report
- CEO Rob Gordon is retiring at SunRice AGM, new CEO Paul Serra will be shadowing Rob Gordon for a period of time.

MOTION

To wish Rob Gordon the very best for his retirement and thank him for his many years of service.

Moved Gillian Kirkup, Seconded: Peter Herrmann

Carried

Rice Breeding Australia

- Introduce Dr Chris Proud as RBA's breeder
- RBA was established in June 2022 to transition breeding from NSW DPI. Is a company set up by SunRice, RGA and AgriFutures.
- 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 focussed 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 focussing 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 has established 5 year agreement with Knagge family just outside Leeton as a homesite
- 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 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 welcomes transparency, questions and the opportunity for growers to come and see what we do.
- RBA is present at the Rice MC
- RBA is operating with a commercial mindset and maximising return to growers on the levy dollars

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.

Branch Elections

Scott Williams declared all positions vacant and handed over to Peter Herrmann to conduct the elections:

President: Scott Williams

Nominated: Garry Knagge, Seconded Gillian Kirkup

Vice President: Garry Knagge

Nominated: Scott Williams, Seconded Barry Kirkup

Secretary: Matt Robertson

Nominated: Scott Williams, Gillian Kirkup

Central Executive: Scott Williams (delegate), Garry Knagge (alternate)

Nominated: Ian Dahlenburg, Seconded Garry Knagge

CE Alternate: Matt Robinson, Barry Kirkup & David Pike

Nominated: Scott Williams, Seconded Garry Knagge

Seed Committee: David Pike (Delegate) Barry Kirkup (alternate)

Nominated: Scott Williams, Seconded Garry Knagge

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

General Business

Plibersek opened have your say feedback mechanism.

Garry Knagge encouraged people to join the RGA policy committees – Water, Environment and Primary Industry

Meeting closed: 8:25am

