

20 March 2020



A letter to Stakeholders regarding Covid-19

The Rice Marketing Board

FOR THE STATE
OF NEW SOUTH
WALES

The Rice Marketing Board for the State of New South Wales (the RMB) puts the interests of the rice growers of New South Wales first in everything it does. The Covid-19 pandemic has created disruption on a global scale but I would like to assure NSW's rice growers, Authorised Buyer Licence Holders and the wider stakeholder groups with whom the Board interacts that the RMB is doing everything it can to minimise the impact of the pandemic on the NSW rice industry.

In response to the pandemic, the RMB has held discussions with SunRice, the largest buyer of NSW Rice, about such issues as:

- measures that might be taken to combat potential shortages of rice in the Australian market;
- the impacts on supply chains and in particular on the importation of chemicals needed to support the 2020 rice cropping program; and
- the impacts on SunRice's export and off-shore operations.

The RMB has also alerted the Department of Primary Industries to the immediate impact of the pandemic on the NSW rice industry and the potential for further impact.

Consistent with Commonwealth and State Government advice, the RMB is conducting its Board meetings by teleconference and is only attending those meetings and activities that it deems to be absolutely essential. The RMB employs two staff (one of whom only works part-time) and both are now working from home and will continue to do so until it is appropriate for them to return to the RMB's office – importantly, stakeholders will continue to be able to access the RMB's Board Secretary via the usual email address and phone numbers.

Government is telling us that the pandemic and associated disruption may get worse before things start to stabilise and that the personal and collective measures that we are all being encouraged to embrace may have to be observed for an extended period of time. Please be assured that the RMB remains very much open for business and that our thoughts are with those whose health and livelihoods have been placed at risk by Covid-19.

John Culleton
Chair, Rice Marketing Board for the State of New South Wales