

**Rice Marketing Board
of the State of New
South Wales**



Communications plan

Prepared in September 2018

Approved by the Board December 2018

Background

The Rice Marketing Board for the State of New South Wales (RMB) was established under the *Marketing of Primary Products Act 1927* and was officially constituted in 1928.

The RMB's primary function is to obtain the best possible monetary return to rice growers consistent with the maintenance of orderly marketing. It operates under the authority of and in accordance with the *Rice Marketing Act 1983*. Under the Act, all rice produced in the State of NSW (NSW) is the legal property of the RMB.

Communications objectives

In line with the objectives of the RMB this communications plan aims to:

- Ensure stakeholders continue to retain confidence in the RMB as an organisation that operates transparently and without prejudice.
- Increase transparency of the policies, processes and governance of the RMB.
- Build a clearer understanding amongst stakeholders of the independent regulatory role of the RMB.
- Communicate equally with new stakeholders in the Northern NSW area and existing well-established stakeholders in Southern NSW.
- Establish new communication mechanisms with Northern NSW growers.
- Continue to liaise with all NSW rice growers to understand their needs and challenges.
- Represent growers in relation to vesting to ensure the marketing of their commodity is effective in domestic and international markets.

Messages

The aim is to create simple messages that explain the role of the RMB that can be used across multiple formats. This is not an exhaustive list but provides direction on high-level messaging:

- Unlike other cereal crops, rice is not freely traded and all international rice markets are unique in their characteristics. On average only 25 million of the 600 million tonnes of world annual rice production is traded outside the country of origin. Although Australia only represents around 0.02% of world rice production, our exports represent about 2% of world trade (*statistics from Ricegrowers' Association of Australia website*).
- The RMB supports Australia's rice industry by regulating access to growing and exporting rice, ensuring all industry participants are getting maximum value for their crops.
- New South Wales rice can only be exported through a single entity, to ensure NSW rice growers derive maximum benefits.
- The production of rice is constrained by water availability. This means in years of extreme water shortages there may be less produced than in other years as farmers

allocate water to alternate crops, or alternatively seek to carry over or trade it on the temporary water market.

- Domestic producers are able to get a licence to produce rice and sell it within Australia creating a unique market for specialist growers.
- Under *the Rice Marketing Act 1983*, the RMB has rights to all rice grown in NSW, known as 'vesting', and has appointed Ricegrowers Limited (trading as SunRice) as the Sole and Exclusive Exporter of NSW rice until 2022.
- The RMB is an independent regulatory authority that is seeking to get the best possible monetary return for rice growers.
- The RMB is the last commodity marketing authority in Australia.
- The RMB's role is to represent NSW rice growers to ensure the marketing of their commodity is effective in domestic and international markets.
- The RMB is a key participant in the NSW rice industry and supports this innovative industry.

Audiences

All RMB communications activities will be relevant to our key audiences:

- Southern NSW rice growers
- Northern NSW rice growers
- Authorised Buyers
- Ricegrowers' Association of Australia
- Northern Rivers Rice Growers Association
- Ricegrowers Limited (trading as SunRice)
- NSW Department of Primary Industries
- State and federal elected representatives

Activities

The communication activities in this plan are intended to be rolled out in a phased approach. It should not be anticipated that everything can be achieved in a short period of time.

Website

The website is regularly updated with news items, however the RMB will ensure the navigation and content are improved incrementally to ensure it provides stakeholders with an easily accessible, one-stop-shop for information.

Actions:

- **Improve website navigation** to make it easier for visitors to access the relevant information.

- **Review website content annually**, to ensure it remains relevant to stakeholder needs.
- **Accessibility and Useability** – Undertake some updates to meet W3C's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines, which is a NSW government commitment (<https://www.nsw.gov.au/accessibility-statement/>).
- **Implement communications recommendations from the Governance Review**
 - Develop a charter and that it be placed on the website to increase the transparency of the role of the RMB.
 - Develop Charters for all Sub Committees and place them on the website.
 - Publish the "Service Level Agreement" as a public document with regular status reports on the website.

Correspondence

Written correspondence, email or post, is still a preferred channel of communication for most RMB stakeholders and will continue to be a major communications channel. The RMB has a regular schedule of correspondence:

- A letter once a year at harvest time to growers.
- Every July holders of Authorised Buyer Licences are sent their annual return where they report how many tonnes of rice was grown, bought from others and sold to Authorised Buyers.
- All growers and Authorised Buyers are invited to the RMB Annual Meeting.

Social media

Resourcing constraints will mean that the RMB will not be able to effectively maintain a social media presence, nor as a regulator does it have the content needed to facilitate the two-way conversation expected in these channels. However, social media remains a powerful communications channel that will be capitalised.

Action:

- **Use other organisations' social media channels.** The RMB will capitalise on other stakeholders' channels to build awareness and share information.

Stakeholder engagement

The Ricegrowers' Association of Australia is a key stakeholder for the organisation and is an existing trusted channel. Authorised Buyers licensed to buy NSW rice are an important stakeholder group. There is also a new stakeholder group emerging in the Northern Rivers area that should also receive communications.

Actions:

- **Rice Matters** – Rice Matters is an industry newsletter that is sent out to around 500 members of the Ricegrowers' Association of Australia.
 - The RMB will continue to contribute monthly to Rice Matters Newsletter.

- All contributions to Rice Matters will be published on the RMB website to allow a broader audience to access the information.
- **Ricegrowers' Association of Australia branch meetings** – The RMB will continue to present annually at Ricegrowers' Association of Australia meetings.
- **Authorised Buyers** – The RMB will continue to maintain relationships with licensed Authorised Buyers through any communications channels and the annual reporting process.
- **Northern Rivers Rice Growers Association** – The RMB will utilise any communications channels to share content, including Rice Matters contributions.

Industry events

The RMB currently participates in a number of events each year. RMB presence will be maintained and, in some areas, enhanced.

Actions:

Continue to attend the following industry events, and seek opportunities to participate in new events as they arise:

- Ricegrowers' Association of Australia Annual Conference
- SunRice Annual General Meeting
- Riverina Rice Field Days
- Northern Rivers Rice Field Days.

Sponsorship

Sponsorship provides an opportunity to raise awareness of the RMB with limited resource requirements.

Actions:

- **Ongoing support for Ricegrowers' Association of Australia** – Continue to sponsor the Ricegrowers' Association of Australia annual conference, leadership program and Young Farming Champion award.
- **Northern Rivers support** – Consideration will be given to sponsoring Northern Rivers Rice Growers Association equivalent activities once operational.