



## Our Australian Rice Industry

Growing Rice to Feed the World

### MEDIA RELEASE

1 April 2015

#### **RGA welcomes new state minister for primary industries, land and water**

The Ricegrowers' Association of Australia (RGA) has welcomed the appointment of Niall Blair as NSW Minister for Primary Industries, Land and Water.

RGA President, Les Gordon, said that the RGA is looking forward to working with Mr Blair on a range of important agricultural and water issues.

“Mr Blair is well known to people in the Riverina having spent many years living in Leeton before becoming a parliamentarian. We know he understands the issues faced by the rice industry well and that our views will be always be given a fair hearing.”

Mr Gordon noted the challenging and important nature of the portfolios he has been granted.

“The water portfolio is vitally important at the moment, with the implementation of the Basin Plan at a critical juncture. We need the NSW government to identify the right environmental works and measures projects to ensure productive agriculture doesn't have to forfeit more water entitlements to meet Basin Plan recovery targets. It is a difficult task that requires careful stewardship by the new minister.”

“Mr Blair has also adopted a challenging situation within the primary industries portfolio with the transition to Local Land Services (LLS). Many DPI-funded advisory services have been lost to our region and the replacement LLS model has so far delivered only patchy results for our members. We anticipate sensible leadership to drive improvements in this area.”

“We're confident Mr Blair will get across these issues quickly and engage constructively with the industry in finding solutions. We wish the new minister well and congratulate him on his promotion.”

Finally, Mr Gordon thanked Mr Humphries for his work during a complex and difficult phase of Basin Plan negotiation and implementation. He also expressed thanks to Ms Hodgkinson for her time in the ministry, especially as she had stood up strongly for NSW irrigators during earlier Basin Plan negotiations.

ENDS

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