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Australia's NSW to modernize rice sector exporting to strengthen viabilityÂ in rice industry

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Australia's NSW legislation is set to introduce a Parliament Bill in June, to enhance the long-term viability of the stateâ??s rice industry, which had an estimated farm gate value of $219 million in 2022-23. Government aims to ensure regulations do not hinder agriculture industry growth.

The NSW Government while drafting the Bill to modernise the stateâ??s rice marketing arrangements received requests from rice growers from across NSW to end statutory rice export marketing (â??vestingâ??) arrangements as soon as practical.

Under the Governmentâ??s Bill, vesting for the southern growing region will end 1 July 2025, with the Rice Marketing Board to be wound up by 1 July 2026. Â The NSW Governmentâ??s already announced position to exclude the northern rivers growing region from current vesting arrangements from 1 September 2024 will be retained.

The decision to deregulate the industry in 2025 has been made following engagement from rice grower stakeholders representing the NSW rice industry and comes at a time when rice growers are well-placed to take advantage of the new marketing opportunities. The decision to remove rice vesting also aligns with the recommendations in the recently published Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resources Economics and SciencesÂ â??Independent Report into Rice Vestingâ??.

Under the future arrangements, growers will be afforded greater choice and flexibility to pursue a range of markets, including export markets. It will also benefit the long-term sustainability of the industry in the face of lower water availability and a more

variable climate.

An expert Rice Transition Group which will be led by the NSW Department of Primary Industries and will focus on:

- R&D opportunities to support alternate supply chains
- Ensuring seed supply is maintained for all rice growers
- Unwinding the affairs of the Rice Marketing Board once vesting ends
- Investigating regional development opportunities.

This change to rice marketing arrangements reflects similar deregulation that has occurred over the past decades to other agricultural commodities including wheat, barley and dairy.

NSW Minister for Agriculture Tara Moriarty said, â??The NSW Government while drafting a Bill to modernise the stateâ??s rice marketing arrangements received requests from rice growers in southern NSW to end statutory rice export marketing, the â??vestingâ?? arrangements, sooner rather than later. Discussions with rice growers across the state demonstrated to the Government there was agreement that a transition in rice export marketing be brought forward to 1 July 2025. The NSW Government will support industry as it navigates and manages the transition and acknowledges the contributions made by the rice industry during this process.â?•

NSW Minister for Industry and Trade Anoulack Chanthivong said, "This decision opens the door to more export opportunities for NSW rice growers and that means businesses that are more productive, create more jobs and pay higher wages. The value of goods and services exported from NSW topped $150 billion last year, and we want to work across the economy to do even more.â?•