



**The Hon Katrina Hodgkinson MP**  
**Minister for Primary Industries**  
**Assistant Minister for Tourism and Major Events**

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**MEDIA RELEASE**

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**NEW RICE VARIETY TO UNLOCK NEW MARKETS**

Minister for Primary Industries, Katrina Hodgkinson, today launched a new fragrant rice variety, which will open up new market opportunities for NSW growers and provide consumers with a unique locally-grown product on supermarket shelves.

Ms Hodgkinson said the new rice variety, named Topaz, was put to the test today at an exclusive cooking demonstration and taste testing at NSW Parliament, hosted by well-known chef and author, Poh Ling Yeow.

“Unlike other varieties of fragrant rice which are often grown overseas in tropical and sub-tropical conditions, Topaz is bred for the temperate Riverina region,” Ms Hodgkinson said.

“The new rice variety will allow the State’s rice farmers to tap into growing fragrant rice markets, both domestically and overseas.

“Jasmine-style fragrant rice is the largest segment of the Australian rice market and one of the fastest growing rice markets globally.

“For Australian consumers, Topaz will mean access to a new locally grown, high quality fragrant rice variety, while in our Asian markets Topaz will provide an exciting new option in fragrant grains.”

Ms Hodgkinson said that Topaz was developed by the Department of Primary Industries’ (DPI) rice-breeding team at Yanco, in partnership with Rural Industries Research Development Corporation, SunRice and Rice Research Australia Pty Ltd.

“DPI’s rice-breeding program has released 19 locally bred rice varieties to date, which have proven to be world beaters for crop yields and the sustainable, efficient use of resources,” Ms Hodgkinson said.

“NSW rice farmers have the highest average yield for rice globally, while using 50 per cent less water than the global average.

“NSW rice growers, who grow more than 90 per cent of the Australian rice crop, are world leader in production efficiency, sustainability and water efficiency.”

SunRice Chairman, Gerry Lawson, said market testing of Topaz was conducted in Hong Kong during 2013.

“Topaz scored the highest in attributes of taste, appearance and flavour compared with the market leading Thai Jasmine variety and Vietnamese fragrant rice,” Mr Lawson said.

“It is an exciting time to be part of the Australian rice industry.

“Australian rice is in high demand across international markets, and with about 80pc of the annual Australian crop exported, the release of Topaz will further drive SunRice’s impressive growth by unlocking new market opportunities in the lucrative fragrant category.”

Topaz will be available to rice growers in October when the 2014-15 planting commences and consumers can expect to see Topaz on the supermarket shelves from June 2015.