



## EDITORIAL

# MIA rice falling short of world domination

**T**HERE were some bittersweet moments for MIA rice growers on Tuesday morning.

On one hand, they're receiving unprecedented praise from experts for their practices as Griffith hosts the International Temperate Rice Conference.

On the other, they head home knowing it's harder than ever to produce a rice yield and tap into demand reaching record highs.

Director general of the International Rice Research Institute Dr Matthew Morell, spoke on the industry's future earlier in the week, and the role rice will play in a fast-changing world.

Dr Morell was also unequivocal in his praise for MIA rice growers, suggesting the advancements of local irrigation puts the region in the top echelon for sustainable reforms for the future.

According to the World Health Organisation rice is the dominant staple food crop for an estimated half of the world's population.

And if global population trends continue as projected, it spells a potential unportable demand even the technological advancement of the MIA rice growing industry can't fill.

Population is a separate issue to local rice production, but it underlines a certain fact – there will always be a demand for rice.

It's an unbackable favourite, and MIA irrigators know this better than anyone.

But while Griffith receives praise for industry standards, it's important to remember why MIA rice growers are the best in the world.

Already facing a tough task growing a product in a semi-arid region, many on the land were handed an even heavier handicap

around a decade ago with the implementation of the of the Murray-Darling Basin Plan.

Innovation and working with less has become the name of the game.

But while new techniques mean the MIA is held in the highest esteem among

global rice growers, it's small consolation for farmers struggling at the hands of a Plan, sucking the well dry.

It seems harsh – our growers are being labelled 'world leaders' in their industry by the experts, but are facing tougher challenges year-on-year to survive.

Serious questions have to be asked of these bodies refusing to assist an industry to take advantage of an all-time record demand. MIA rice growing *should* be in its prime. It should be supporting a region, and the nation's food bowl, not falling short of its potential.

