

Media Release

The Hon Jaclyn Symes MLC

Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council

Minister for Regional Development

Minister for Agriculture

Minister for Resources



Tuesday, 14 July 2020

IMPROVING SAFETY FOR VICTORIAN FARMS

A newly established Farm Safety Council is providing advice to the Victorian Government and agriculture sector on how to reduce injuries and deaths of people on farms in Victoria.

The Council, established by Minister for Agriculture Jaclyn Symes has been meeting to provide guidance on the activities that could be prioritised by government to make farms safer and change farm safety culture, ultimately reducing the number of deaths and injuries on farms.

The agricultural sector is overly represented in fatality statistics, making up less than three per cent of the Victorian workforce but more than 30 per cent of workplace deaths.

Victorians who live on or interact with a farm, including children, suppliers and contractors can also be at risk of an unsafe workplace.

The Council includes members from ten organisations, including Kidsafe Victoria, National Centre for Farmer Health, Victorian Agriculture Horticulture and Conservation Training Network, Australian Workers Union, Victorian Farmers Federation, United Workers Union, Worksafe Victoria, Department of Health and Human Services, Agriculture Victoria and the Department of Education and Training.

The Council creates links with other programs that focus on the safety, health and wellbeing of farmers and their families.

This includes the \$6 million Quad Bike Rebate Scheme, mental health support being provided through drought and bushfire recovery, and industry-led services such as Dairy Australia's farm safety programs.

The Farm Safety Council is part of the Victorian Government's \$20 million *Victoria's Smarter, Safer Farms* program and *Making our farms safer* election commitment, which are addressing skills and safety issues in the agriculture sector.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Agriculture Jaclyn Symes

"We want our farms to be safe places for those who live, work or visit them. The advice provided by the Farm Safety Council will guide industry and government on what can be done to make farms safer."

"In the past five months, six people have died while working on a farm – that's six people too many. It is critical that we find solutions to help keep people safe."

Quote attributable to Minister for Workplace Safety Jill Hennessy

"Farms continue to be one of the deadliest workplaces, so it's important that we use the stories and information given to us through this Council to make sure every person on a farm gets home from work safely."