

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



Friday, 24 July 2020

FARM SAFETY OFFICERS KEEPING VICTORIANS SAFER

The Victorian Government is backing a new initiative to reduce the number of people injured and killed on farms.

Minister for Agriculture Jaclyn Symes today announced the Victorian Farmers Federation (VFF) will receive a \$3 million *Making our Farms Safer* grant to employ two farm safety officers and deliver new resources.

Serving farmers across Victoria, the farm safety officers will provide information and advice on improving farm safety, via on-farm safety walks designed to help farmers identify risks and the changes they can make to improve the safety of their farms.

The VFF will also use the funds to develop an online platform with a range of farm safety resources for Victoria's farmers that help them to adopt better farm safety and health practices.

On average there are around two serious injuries on Victorian farms every day and in the past five months six people have died while working on a farm.

Those at risk of injury or death on Victorian farms are not just farmers, but also farm families, employees, suppliers and contractors. To address this, there is a need to change the culture and mindset of people in agriculture to prioritise safety.

The Government recognises that changing attitudes and improving the sector's focus on safe farming practices needs to be driven by industry to be best suited for industry, with the VFF helping to lead this change.

Other initiatives the Government is implementing to change these attitudes include funding for Kidsafe Victoria and the National Centre for Farmer Health to run campaigns aimed at school students, and the establishment of the Farm Safety Council to advise on how to reduce farm injuries and deaths.

The *Making our Farms Safer* grant is part of the Government's \$20 million *Victoria's Smarter, Safer Farms* program and *Safer Farms* election commitment, addressing skills and safety issues in the agriculture sector.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Agriculture Jaclyn Symes

"Lives are forever changed by workplace deaths – all of them devastating and needless. That's why we're working with industry to reach as many people as possible and change the attitudes around farm workplace safety."

"We want our farms to be safe places for those who live, work or visit them. The work that the VFF will carry out with this grant will make a difference in achieving this for all Victorian farms."

Quotes attributable to Victorian Farmers Federation President David Jochinke

"Last year almost half of all workplace deaths in Victoria involved some sort of machinery or heavy vehicles, making farms one of the leading workplace locations for deaths and injuries in the state."

"We all have a role in keeping our families, ourselves and our workplace safe and the Making our Farms Safer grant will help deliver the resources and tools needed to make Victorian farms safer."

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