

Media Release

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Minister for Workplace Safety
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FARMERS BACK HARD-HITTING SAFETY CAMPAIGN

Victorian farmers are encouraging each other to put safety on the top of their daily to-do lists as part of an ongoing campaign to change industry attitudes towards safety.

WorkSafe's "It's never you, until it is" campaign is targeting the common industry mindset that a death or life-changing injury will never happen on your farm and will run across regional television, print, radio, digital and social media.

The campaign confronts the "bulletproof" attitudes among many farmers and agriculture workers who believe a serious incident won't happen to them. It challenges the mindset that experience and common sense alone will prevent a serious incident and highlights the tragic consequences if farmers do not make safety a priority.

Farmers backing the campaign have agreed to share their stories and show the wide-ranging benefits of good safety practices to encourage more in the industry to put safety at the centre of their work.

Third-generation vegetable grower Catherine Velisha, who took over her family's enterprise about three years ago, is one farmer who has taken steps taken to ensure safety on her property.

Ms Velisha features in a video sharing her own experience of how improving safety had been a boost, not a burden, to the smooth running of her farm.

People working in agriculture continue to be well over-represented in workplace deaths, making up about 14 per cent of annual fatalities, despite the industry only employing about two per cent of Victoria's workforce.

Serious injuries are also common, with an average of eight people every week working in agriculture injured seriously enough to make a worker's compensation claim.

Farmers can make their farms safer by taking time to think about how they can address some of the biggest risks on farms – vehicles overturning, being run over by vehicles, being caught in machinery or being injured by livestock.

Assistance to work through reducing those risks is available from WorkSafe, the OHS Essentials Program and the Farm Safety Rebate.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Workplace Safety Ingrid Stitt

"The devastating aftermath of a death or life-changing workplace incident on a farm cannot be overstated, but too often there's a mindset that a tragic incident will never happen to you."

"Farmers are sharing their stories about how a normal day can turn to tragedy when you don't keep safety front of mind. I thank everyone that's reached out and shared their experiences – helping keep the focus on farm safety."

Quote attributable to Minister for Agriculture Mary-Anne Thomas

"It's a tragic reality that farmers are over-represented in workplace deaths – that's why it's so important that farmers are sharing their own stories to help create safer workplaces across the industry."

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