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Farmsafe Australia Launches a New Strategic Direction

Farmsafe Australia has released its National Farm Safety Education Fund Strategy, aimed at significantly reducing injuries and fatalities in agriculture by 2030. The Strategy calls for collaborative industry action across a range of work, health and safety impact opportunities.

Minister for Agriculture, Drought and Emergency Management, David Littleproud said the strategy was an important step towards safer farms for farmers, their families and communities.

“The health and safety of our farmers and their families is paramount,” Minister Littleproud said.

“Our farmers have continued to kick goals through the COVID-19 pandemic, with the agriculture sector expected to reach a record \$66 billion in industry production this year.

“But it’s a high-risk working environment.

“This strategy sets a long-term course to improve farm safety.”

Five key impact opportunities have been identified as targets for further investment:

- Leadership and Cultural Change;
- the Next Generation of Farmers;
- Physical and Psychological Well-Being;
- Industry Endorsed Training and Continued Learning; and
- Evidence and Incentivisation.

Farmsafe Australia Chairman Charles Armstrong says the Strategy sends a clear message that agriculture is ready to do things differently.

“There is no denying that agriculture needs to change its relationship to work health and safety practices. Not only is legislation demanding it, but our people are much too important to allow the culture of ‘she’ll be right mate’ to prevail,” Mr Armstrong said.

“Right now, we’re seeing firsthand the importance of our farmers to Australia – they are truly essential. But they also work in an extremely high-risk environment. Agriculture consistently ranks as one of the most dangerous industries for workers in Australia.”

Committed to keeping you safer on Australian Farms

The Strategy sets an aspiration to end on-farm fatalities, in line with the National Farmers' Federation's 2030 Roadmap. "In the last decade, there have been over 600 fatalities on Australian farms. While it may not be realistic to cut this number to zero in the coming decade, we shouldn't be aspiring for anything less."

Mr Armstrong emphasised that the Strategy is not simply about safer systems, it is also about creating safer farmers by shifting attitudes towards better practices. "Achieving cultural change, especially on farm, will require strong leaders, not just in our peak bodies, but on farm, in our managers and overseers."

"We would like to thank all those who took the time to be interviewed for this strategy – from farmers to industry representatives. We would also like to thank Minister Littleproud and the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment, for revitalising Farmsafe Australia and commissioning the research effort which underpins the Strategy."

The Australian Government has dedicated a further \$1.6M in funding for farm safety over the next 3 years and Mr Armstrong said the real work of delivering the Strategy will begin now.

"Farmsafe cannot achieve the aspirations we've set by ourselves. We are calling on industry and government to get behind the Strategy and look for ways in which we can connect and collaborate, not only to avoid duplication, but to enhance and bring together diverse resources in ways that can achieve more; more awareness, more engagement, more impact, more value."

Farmsafe Australia will report annually, through the Safer Farms Report, to measure performance against the Strategy and to ensure delivery of programs and initiatives that genuinely increase safety on farm.

"The National Farm Safety Education Fund Strategy will play a valuable role in guiding our work, health and safety progress as an industry," Mr Armstrong concluded. For a full copy of the National Farm Safety Education Fund Strategy, head to the Industry Reports section of the Farmsafe website www.farmsafe.org.au.

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