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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## Are Your Workers in Safe Hands? The Critical Role of First Aid Training in Agriculture

As part of National Farm Safety Week, Farmsafe Australia is drawing attention to the simple, practical behaviours, habits and skills that can be implemented to improve safety culture on Australian farms. One skillset of vital importance is that of first aid training in the agricultural sector.

The campaign, entitled 'In Safe Hands' follows six different farm businesses across the country, to find out how they develop practical solutions to work, health and safety challenges and implement them effectively on farm. The campaign aims to inform and educate farmers on how to reduce the risk of life-altering injury and fatality on Australian farms.

However, Farmsafe Australia recognises that there is also a critical role for farmers and farm workers to play when and if a traumatic incident does occur. Agricultural workers in rural and remote regions often encounter unique challenges, including limited access to immediate medical assistance. Investing in comprehensive first aid and trauma care training equips individuals with the skills needed to respond effectively by providing immediate and life-saving support until professional help arrives.

One of the properties featured in the campaign, Bridge Creek Station run by Don and Kelly White of DK Grazing in the Northern Territory, prioritises first aid training as part of their annual start-up each year, ensuring all staff, new and returning, are ready to respond in the event of an emergency. For them, building a safer culture for their workers and their families starts with making sure that everyone is properly trained, able to provide help and support to one another and confident in the jobs they are asked to do.

Felicity Richards, Chair of Farmsafe Australia, highlights the significance of empowering agricultural workers with first aid and trauma care skills. 'Obviously we want to see farmers doing everything that they can to prevent significant injuries from happening on their farms by implementing safer workplace behaviours; however, if a serious incident occurs, we need to make sure that our workforce is trained to respond. Rural and remote areas pose distinctive challenges, and having the ability to respond effectively during emergencies can make a crucial difference in saving lives.'

Understanding that traumatic incidents can happen anywhere and at any time, Farmsafe Australia encourages farmers, farm workers, and rural communities to prioritise training programs that focus on building the skills and confidence necessary to respond effectively and efficiently. Immediate intervention can significantly impact outcomes, turning potential tragedies into stories of survival and resilience.

The remoteness of many agricultural settings demands a proactive approach. The sheer size of Australia and the distance between remote Australian stations and critical services means that medical assistance may be hours away, underscoring the need for on-site training and preparedness to ensure timely response. First aid training not only instils confidence in individuals but also fosters a culture of safety and preparedness within rural communities.

*Committed to keeping you safer on Australian Farms*

Mrs Richards recognises access to training in the bush can be challenging. 'Access to relevant training in rural, regional, and remote locations is not just a necessity; it's a lifeline for empowering communities with essential skills. That's why Farmsafe Australia will be partnering with First Aid providers to deliver two workshops in the second half of 2024 that focus on first aid in remote settings, bringing training right out on farm and ensuring that there is access to simple, practical solutions for upskilling the agricultural workforce.'

This National Farm Safety Week, Farmsafe Australia is inviting all stakeholders, including government bodies, agricultural businesses, and community leaders, to promote accessible first aid and trauma care training programs across rural, regional and remote Australia. By doing so, we can collectively contribute to safer working environments and reduce the impact of injuries and potential fatalities in our rural and remote areas.

#### FOR MEDIA INQUIRIES, PLEASE CONTACT

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### About Farmsafe Australia

Farmsafe Australia is an industry not-for-profit, farmer-led organisation and the leading Australian voice for farm safety, dedicated to promoting practical measures that prioritise the safety, health and wellbeing of individuals on the farm. Farmsafe is committed to fostering a culture where the well-being of individuals is at the heart of every agricultural operation.

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## 5 Ways to Incorporate First Aid

Integrating first aid training into your annual workflow on the farm is essential for maintaining a safe and prepared working environment. Here are five ways that will ensure first aid training is an integral part of your farm's routine:

- Schedule Annual Training Sessions:** Plan and schedule first aid training sessions each year. Align these sessions with other regular safety meetings or during less busy farming periods to ensure maximum participation. Partner with certified first aid trainers to provide comprehensive training tailored to the specific risks of your farm.
- Incorporate First Aid into Safety Drills:** Include first aid practice in regular safety drills, such as fire, equipment, or chemical spill drills. Simulating real-life scenarios helps reinforce first aid skills and ensures that all farm workers know how to respond in various emergency situations.
- Designate a First Aid Officer or Team:** Establish a designated officer or team responsible for maintaining first aid readiness on the farm. This team can ensure that first aid kits are regularly stocked and in date, training materials are up-to-date, and new employees receive proper first aid orientation. Rotating team membership annually can keep everyone engaged and knowledgeable.
- Ensure Workers are Equipped With a PLB:** Personal Locator Beacons or PLBs can significantly reduce the time it takes to receive medical attention, if it is needed, by ensuring that responders know where to find the injured person.
- Refresher Courses and Toolbox Meetings:** Conduct short refresher courses or toolbox meetings to keep first aid knowledge fresh. These can be brief sessions focusing on different aspects of first aid, such as CPR, wound care, or dealing with fractures.