



Farmers' forum: **Safety in agriculture**

Program

Cummins Theatre, Merredin, Friday 18 July 2025



Acknowledgement of Country

The Department of Local Government, Industry Regulation and Safety (LGIRS) respectfully acknowledges Aboriginal peoples as being the traditional custodians of Western Australia.

We acknowledge the enduring connection Aboriginal people continue to share with the land, sea and sky through both their ancestral ties and custodianship to Country. We pay our respect to Elders both past and present, and acknowledge the value brought to our department through the collective contribution of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across Western Australia.



About the event

Ahead of National Farm Safety Week, WorkSafe Western Australia (WA) welcomes you to the Farmers' forum: Safety in agriculture 2025 event in Merredin.

Today we bring together a range of sector experts and WorkSafe agricultural safety inspectors to discuss priority topics and provide farmers with ideas and practical approaches for establishing good safety practices.

WorkSafe will also be launching a series of agricultural safety animations developed to provide quick, accessible information to farmers and others with an interest in health and safety in agriculture.

Welcome



Sally North

WorkSafe Commissioner, LGIRS

Welcome to WorkSafe's Farmers' forum here in the Wheatbelt town of Merredin. This is the second of our agricultural safety forums, following a very successful similar event in Bunbury last year.

The Wheatbelt region is important to Western Australia's economy, contributing around two-thirds of the State's wheat production and half of its wool production. So it's also important that farmers in the area remain healthy and safe.

Today's event will feature a number of experts in the agriculture and safety fields, with speakers presenting the latest knowledge and issues in the areas of machinery guarding, dangerous goods, worker's compensation, electrical hazards and psychosocial issues.

I have no doubt that everyone in attendance will find the forum a valuable learning experience that will help improve health and safety on farms. Thank you for your participation.

Program

9.00 am	Registration	
9.30 am	MC's introduction	Andrew Ballam General Manager Regulatory Training and Business Services, WorkSafe, LGIRS
9.35 am	Welcome address Overview of WorkSafe's priorities in agriculture and some of the things we have been working on following the independent Inquiry into the agricultural industry in WA.	Sally North WorkSafe Commissioner, LGIRS
9.45 am	Unguarded machinery This session will discuss common risks, real-life on-farm issues and practical steps to enhance machinery safety. It will be providing valuable insights into protecting workers and preventing injuries through increased awareness and simple, effective solutions.	David Sullivan Projects and Membership Manager, SafeFarms WA
10.05 am	Dangerous goods on farms This presentation will highlight essential safety practices for transport, storing and handling of dangerous goods on farms. Attendees will learn how to recognise dangerous goods, implement effective security measures, and protect storage areas from potential hazards.	Dragana Vukmirovic Senior Dangerous Goods Officer, LGIRS
10.30 am	Safety is always in season Workers compensation insurance, effective return to work programs, and strong worker support are critical throughout agricultural industries. Discover how WorkCover WA is using data to protect every worker and every employer, every day.	Rebecca Harris General Manager Regulatory Services, WorkCover WA

10:45 am	Morning tea	
11.05 am	Electrical safety Discussion on electrical safety on farming and rural properties, covering electrical hazards associated with electrical power cords, fittings, machinery, tools and equipment, and portable generators; equipment maintenance, inspection and storage; and overhead power lines and power poles.	Joseph Byrne Inspector, WorkSafe, LGIRS
11.25 am	Psychosocial hazards in agriculture This session will focus on the practical steps that workplaces in the agriculture industry can take to understand and manage psychosocial hazards in the workplace.	Terence Chia Senior Inspector Scientific Officer, WorkSafe Division, LGIRS
11.45 am	Launch of WorkSafe agricultural safety animations Presenting a series of agricultural safety animations developed to provide quick, accessible information to farmers and others with an interest in health and safety in agriculture.	Jaime Rebelo Director Industrial and Regional Industries, WorkSafe, LGIRS
12.05 pm	Closing remarks	Jaime Rebelo Director Industrial and Regional Industries, WorkSafe, LGIRS
12.15 pm	Forum concludes with a networking lunch	

Master of ceremonies



Andrew Ballam

General Manager Regulatory Training and Business Services, WorkSafe, LGIRS

Andrew has been with WorkSafe for more than a decade, and is currently responsible for a number of internally-focussed functions including the professional development of WorkSafe inspectors and investigators, the development and improvement of internal processes, and the provision of administrative support.

He has led teams focused on external information and education, including the agency's various websites and learning platforms, guidance publications and events.

Andrew has vocational qualifications in training, assessment and e-learning, and holds degrees in adult education and human resource management. He has experience in the public and private sectors, as well as in not-for-profit and, prior to joining WorkSafe, held roles in communications, leadership development, learning and development, and recruitment.

Our speakers



Sally North

WorkSafe Commissioner, LGIRS

Sally is the WorkSafe Commissioner in WA. She greatly values the opportunity to make a difference to the community through WorkSafe's education, inspections, investigations, legal and regulatory support teams and through collaboration with stakeholders.

Sally has over 20 years' experience with WorkSafe, having previously been the Deputy WorkSafe Commissioner. She has also led a WorkSafe directorate that included specialist teams of inspectors covering human factors and ergonomics, asbestos, occupational hygiene, plant and engineering and industry groups for the public sector and related industries, and the retail and service industries.

Sally is involved in State and national committees and working groups on work health and safety, and has qualifications in chemistry, OSH, occupational hygiene and business administration.



David Sullivan

Projects and Membership Manager, SafeFarms WA

David Sullivan, Manager of Membership and Projects at SafeFarms WA, brings extensive global experience in agriculture and safety. Raised on a WA farm and educated in Agricultural Business Management, he has worked in live export, cattle station management, and agricultural safety across North America and Europe. As Director of Gear Up for Ag, he trained thousands in farm safety. Now back in Australia, he leads programs and resources to improve safety outcomes for farmers.



Dragana Vukmirovic

Senior Dangerous Goods Officer, LGIRS

Dragana is a dangerous goods specialist known for making complex safety regulations make sense. With years of experience in hazardous materials management and rural safety, she's helped farmers, transporters, and regulators navigate the practical realities of storing and handling dangerous goods. Dragana is passionate about making safety straightforward, and she brings a practical, down-to-earth approach to her work.



Rebecca Harris

General Manager Regulatory Services, WorkCover WA

Rebecca is a proud career public servant with extensive experience working in policy, governance, compliance and regulation across a range of public sector agencies.

She has held senior executive positions at the Department of Education, Department of Premier and the Cabinet and the Public Sector Commission before commencing at WorkCover WA in 2019. As the General Manager Regulatory Services, she is responsible for steering WorkCover WA's regulation, compliance and education activities.

Rebecca holds a Bachelor of Education, Master of Education and Master of Public Administration and Management.



Joseph Byrne

Inspector, WorkSafe, LGIRS

Joseph is an inspector in the WorkSafe construction team and a licenced electrician.

He completed electrical training in the Pilbara and has spent more than 25 years on the tools as an electrician, electrical supervisor and leading hand throughout Australia and overseas. Joseph joined WorkSafe in 2020 following an electrical incident and injuries to a fellow workmate while working on the same construction site.

Joseph has five kids and is grateful to be part of ensuring health and safety in the workplace which in turn contributes to a thriving economy and future.



Terence Chia

Senior Inspector Scientific Officer,
WorkSafe Division, LGIRS

Terence Chia is a Senior Inspector Scientific Officer at WorkSafe WA, specialising in the regulation of psychosocial hazards under the Work Health and Safety Act. He is a registered psychologist with a background in organisational psychology and holds a PhD in Organisational Behaviour. Terence brings expertise in psychosocial risk management, team and organisational dynamics, and systemic approaches to workplace safety. He has led complex, trauma-informed investigations into issues such as bullying, harassment, and exposure to potentially traumatic events. Before joining WorkSafe, Terence worked as an academic in organisational behaviour and leadership, and also held roles in leadership consulting and workplace behaviour assessment across the public and private sectors.



Jaime Rebelo

Director Industrial and Regional Industries,
WorkSafe, LGIRS

Jaime oversees the enforcement efforts of WorkSafe across the construction, manufacturing, transportation and agricultural sectors in WA.

He aims at making a difference through his role and seeks opportunities to collaborate with all relevant stakeholders in driving cultural change in safe work practices. Jaime is involved in State and national committees and working groups on work health and safety.

Jaime joined WorkSafe in January 2023, bringing a variety of experience from within the regulatory framework in the role of chief inspector and director for the occupational safety, health and environment regulator in Brunei. He was instrumental in the enforcement of OSH legislative requirements across all workplaces, including the oil and gas industry, and general industries in Brunei.

Jaime has a background in marine logistics as well as work health and safety matters. He spent his early years as a mariner, having been a master mariner on LNG carriers with Shell before moving into strategic onshore roles.

Jaime has qualifications in nautical sciences, OSH and business administration. He has a poetry book published in his name.

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