



The cost of safety: It's not what you think

Agricultural safety forum

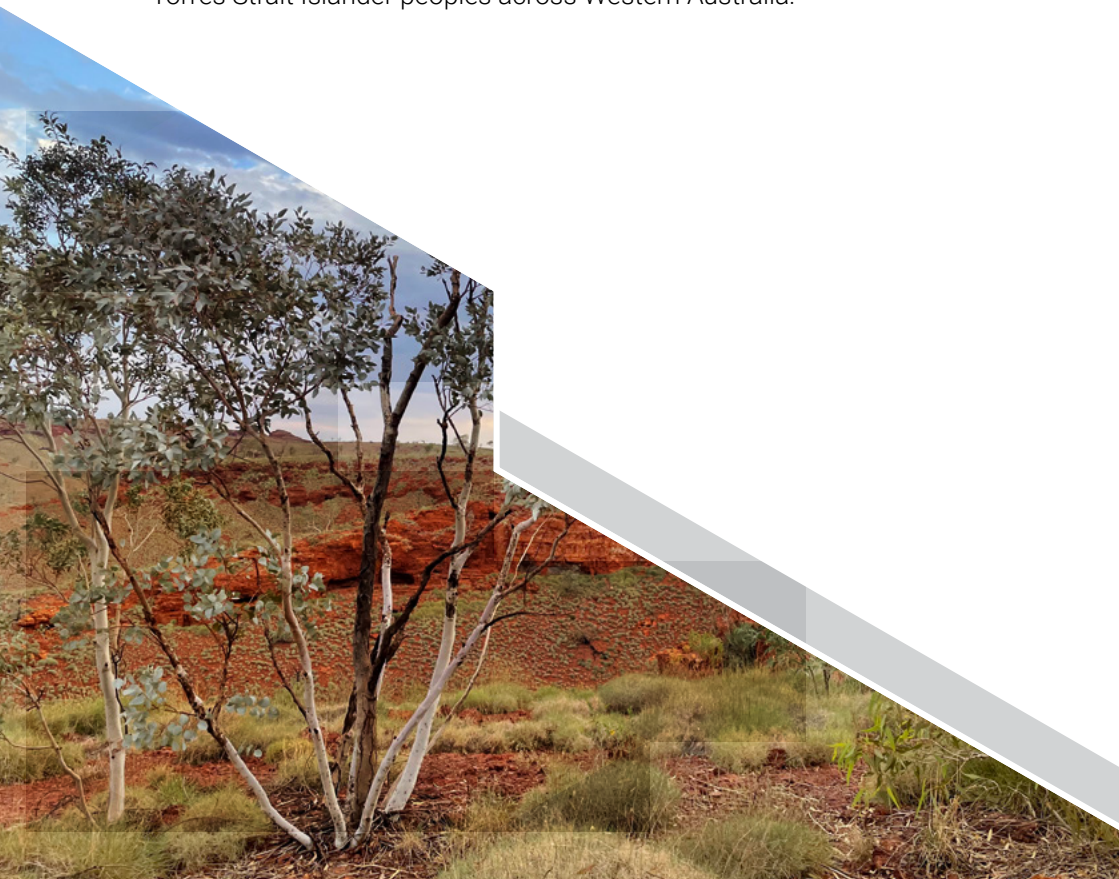
Program

Bunbury Regional Entertainment Centre
Friday, 24 July 2026

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

WorkSafe Western Australia (WA) welcomes you to our annual agricultural forum as part of National Farm Safety Week. This year, we have returned to Bunbury, bringing together sector and WorkSafe experts to explore the theme, *The cost of safety: It's not what you think*.

This morning we will see presentations from WorkSafe Investigations, WorkCover WA and St John WA looking at the cost consequences of not having good safety systems and practices in place on a farm. After morning tea, the WorkSafe agriculture team will outline what needs to be done to get those systems and practices in place, and a panel of farmers, chaired by Safe Farms WA, will discuss what they have done on their properties to create a safe working environment for their workers, their families and themselves.

The forum is for farmers, agriculture educators, students and others working in the sector, as well as anyone with an interest in how to make agricultural workplaces healthier and safer.

Welcome

Welcome to the WorkSafe agricultural safety forum here in the city of Bunbury. This is the third of our agricultural safety forums, following successful events in Bunbury in 2024 and last year in the Wheatbelt town of Merredin.

The theme of the forum is '*The cost of safety: It's not what you think*', and we will be taking a close look at the actual cost of a work-related injury on a farm. As the title suggests, it's probably not what you think.

Safety in agriculture is a priority for us at WorkSafe. Right now, you are more likely to be fatally injured in a farming workplace than in other sectors like construction or mining, but it is absolutely possible to make practical changes to make things safer.

Today you will hear presentations from WorkCover WA and St John WA on the costs and consequences of not having good safety systems and practices in place on farms.

WorkSafe's agriculture team will outline what you need to do to get these systems in place on your farm, followed by a panel discussion in which farmers will share what they have done to create a safe working environment on their properties.

I trust you will find this forum a valuable learning experience that will help you to make your farm a safe and healthy working environment for your workers, your family and yourself.

Thank you for your valuable time, and over the course of the forum I encourage you to write down two or three actions you can take to make your workplace safer.

Sally North

WorkSafe Commissioner, LGIRS

Master of ceremonies



Andrew Ballam

General Manager Regulatory Training and Business Services, WorkSafe, LGIRS

Andrew Ballam has been with WorkSafe for more than a decade and is currently responsible for a number of internally-focussed functions. He has led teams on external information and education, including the agency's various websites and learning platforms, guidance publications and events.

Program

09.00 am	Registration	
09:30 am	MC welcome and housekeeping	Andrew Ballam General Manager Regulatory Training and Business Services, WorkSafe, LGIRS
09:35 am	Opening address	Sally North WorkSafe Commissioner, LGIRS
09:45 am	What to expect from a WorkSafe investigation	Linda Carter Manager Investigations, WorkSafe Investigation Branch, WorkSafe, LGIRS
10:15 am	Signals, not statistics: Reading the story of the Western Australian workers' compensation and injury management scheme	Rebecca Harris Acting CEO WorkCover WA
10:45 am	Serious farming incidents: Perspectives from the ambulance lens	Justin Fonte Head of Growth & Innovation, St John WA
11:15 am	Morning tea	

11:45 am	Do safety systems really work? Understanding what makes them effective	Geoff Kennedy Senior Inspector, WorkSafe, LGIRS
12:15 pm	Safety in practice: Farmers discuss their experience	David Sullivan Projects and Membership Manager, SafeFarms WA Mike Littlely Workplace Safety and Environment Manager, Westpork Elizabeth Smith Winemaker, Frankland Estate Bronwyn Fox Farmer, Rockhill Farming; Chair Potato Growers Assoc. WA
13:00 pm	Closing remarks	Jaime Rebelo Director Industrial and Regional Industries, WorkSafe, LGIRS
13.15 pm	Forum concludes with a networking lunch	

Our speakers

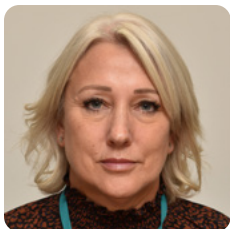


Sally North

WorkSafe Commissioner, LGIRS

Sally North is the WorkSafe Commissioner for Western Australia, leading the state's work health and safety regulator with a strong focus on prevention, integrity and community impact. With a background in chemistry, OSH, occupational hygiene and business administration, she brings deep knowledge and practical experience from both industry and regulatory roles.

Sally is a passionate advocate for evidence-based decision-making and values-driven leadership to create safer, healthier workplaces.



Linda Carter

Manager Investigations, WorkSafe Investigation
Branch, WorkSafe, LGIRS

Linda Carter commenced with Worksafe Investigations in 2022 after 17 years in the WA Police, with 14 years as a Detective. She spent 12 months in the city office, working in general industry investigations which covered most sectors, including agriculture.

For the last three years, Linda has been based in the Bunbury office where the majority of investigations are agriculture-related. Linda's team has four investigators, one of whom is the scene examiner. The team is responsible for all regional investigations from Kununurra to Esperance.



Rebecca Harris

Acting CEO WorkCover WA

With over 15 years as a senior executive, Rebecca Harris is a high performer with a focus on strengthening workers' compensation and injury management to achieve positive results for workers and employers. Rebecca has led and delivered on major reform agendas with a focus on public sector regulation and compliance, leadership and capability and workforce practice and diversity. She has a proven track record of successfully leading teams and implementing complex legislative and policy projects.

As the A/CEO of WorkCover WA, Rebecca leads the strategic direction of the Western Australian workers' compensation scheme – driving reform to improve outcomes for injured workers, employers and the community while strengthening system performance and sustainability. Rebecca holds a Master of Education and Master of Public Administration and Management.



Justin Fonte

Head of Growth & Innovation, St John WA

Justin Fonte has more than 25 years' experience spanning medical research, clinical operations and health service leadership. He began his career in health and medical science, publishing research in neurodegenerative disorders, before progressing into senior clinical and operational leadership roles across Western Australia.

As Head of Regional Ambulance Operations from 2018, Justin led ambulance services across 2.5 million square kilometres of regional WA, including high risk agricultural environments.

In his current role, Justin uses ambulance data, service insights and partnerships to identify practical improvements in community wellbeing, health and safety, with a strong focus on injury and illness preparedness and safer outcomes for people working in high risk environments, including agriculture and mining.



Geoff Kennedy

Senior Inspector, WorkSafe, LGIRS

Before taking on his current role in WorkSafe's agriculture team, Geoff Kennedy had been part of WorkSafe's plant and engineering team for 18 years. As a senior plant inspector, Geoff was involved in examining high hazard plant, such as cranes, boilers, pressure equipment, lifts and amusement devices.

In the agriculture team, Geoff's expertise has expanded to include all agricultural machinery, both new and second-hand. In this role, Geoff works with manufacturers and suppliers as well as farmers. He has participated in highly complex investigations around fatalities and injuries involving plant and produced many safety alerts.

Geoff joined the agriculture team with the aim of using his knowledge and expertise to help reduce the number of plant and machinery-related injuries and fatalities in agriculture.



David Sullivan

Projects and Membership Manager,
SafeFarms WA

David Sullivan grew up on his family farm in Western Australia, specialising in broadacre cropping and sheep production. He completed his studies at Marcus Oldham in Agricultural Farm and Business Management before gaining experience in the live export industry and managing a cattle station. As manager of Membership and Projects at SafeFarms WA, David develops practical health and safety resources for the agriculture sector and works closely with farmers, pastoralists and agricultural workers to ensure compliance with workplace health and safety regulations while promoting safe and sustainable farming practices.

David brings an international perspective to agricultural health and safety through his work with the Ag Health and Safety Alliance and its Gear Up for Ag™ program, engaging the next generation of farmers in interactive learning across Canada, the US, Sweden, Denmark and Australia. A key component of his work involves collecting standardised health and safety behaviour data to inform research and develop targeted prevention programs for students, professionals, farmers and agricultural workers.



Mike Littlely

Workplace Safety and Environment Manager, Westpork

Mike Littlely has worked in agriculture for many years with a strong focus on practical farm safety and risk management. He reviews day-to-day farming operations and has experience managing safety around machinery, livestock handling, loading operations, confined spaces, chemical use and workplace procedures.

Mike believes good safety systems need to be realistic, easy to follow, and part of everyday farm culture. He is passionate about helping create safer workplaces while maintaining productivity and supporting the wellbeing of workers, family members and contractors on Westpork farms.



Elizabeth Smith

Winemaker, Frankland Estate

Elizabeth Smith grew up on the property that her family still farms today. She went on to study at the University of Western Australia, graduating in 1998 with a Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Agricultural Science, before furthering her studies in Viticulture and Winemaking at Charles Sturt University.

Elizabeth gained further experience by working vintages in the wine regions of California, Spain and New Zealand. Elizabeth is co-owner of Frankland Estate Wine and more recently worked part time at Frankland Rural.



Bronwyn Fox

Farmer, Rockhill Farming;
Chair Potato Growers Assoc. WA

Bronwyn Fox is a farmer from Dandaragan where she farms with her husband, three kids and parents in law. The family grows ware potatoes and fat lambs for meat for consumers across WA. Bronwyn is also involved in off farm projects including being current Chair of the Potato Growers Association of WA. She is also a non-executive director of the local branch of the Bendigo Bank in Jurien Bay.

Bronwyn is keen to see farm safety adopted on all farms in a simple way. She is always looking for ways to improve safety on their farm and is slowly setting up systems to ensure they are following legislative guidelines. Bronwyn is a keen safety advocate on her own farm and across the industry.



Jaime Rebelo

Director Industrial and Regional Industries,
WorkSafe, LGIRS

Jaime Rebelo 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. He brings a wealth of knowledge and experience from his time as the chief inspector and director for the occupational safety, health and environment regulator in Brunei.

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

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