

WORKSAFE WA AGRICULTURAL INQUIRY REPORT RELEASED

Stephanie Pyle | Senior HR Advisor



The agricultural industry inquiry report has been released by WorkSafe WA and independent inquirer Ms Pamela Scott.

On the 23rd of June 2022, WorkSafe WA's Commissioner Darren Kavanagh announced an independent inquiry into the WA agricultural industry, following the 12th fatality in the industry within 12 months.

The independent inquiry was conducted by Former Chief Industrial Relations Commissioner Ms Pamela Scott and the report has been released alongside the WorkSafe Commissioner's response.

What are the key takeaways?

Eight formal recommendations were identified by Ms Pamela Scott which can be found in the full report.

Here is a summary of what we can expect to come as a result of the findings:

WorkSafe will prioritise the allocation of resources towards the agricultural industry. This includes the establishment of a dedicated specialist Agricultural Team within WorkSafe comprised of inspectors and liaison officers. WorkSafe have commenced the process of appointing an additional 3 inspectors to establish a specialist Agricultural Team of 6 inspectors.

Specialist Agricultural Team activities will involve:

- Proactive and reactive regulatory and advisory inspections
- Participation in industry events and implementation of an Agriculture Communication Strategy
- Developing content and updating the agricultural safety pages of the WorkSafe website
- Development of a newsletter directed at farmers and their workers
- Selected materials to be translated to languages most relevant to the sector
- WorkSafe budgets will prioritise communication, education and awareness to specifically target the agricultural sector

-
- The development of user-friendly and industry-relevant information such as codes of practice specific to the agricultural sector is being considered as a priority
 - WorkSafe will establish an Agriculture Advisory Assistance Program. This means free educational services will be provided to the farming sector by consultants who will visit various regions and provide onsite education. These consultants will be separate from inspectors, meaning they provide proactive support as opposed to issuing penalties
 - WorkSafe will investigate establishing an Agriculture Advisory Assistance Fund. This will be discussed with the State Government with further details to come
 - WorkSafe to reinstate the Agricultural Safety Advisory Committee
 - A proactive campaign targeting both farmers and machinery/equipment manufacturers will take place to draw attention to the need for machinery and equipment to be fit for purpose and for safe operational practices to take place
 - WorkSafe will continue to communicate best practice advice and provide educational material to the agricultural industry. WorkSafe will consider how timely information on causes of fatalities and serious injuries including preventative actions can be released to the industry

These actions will be subject to a two-year review period to determine their success and desired outcomes.

How did we get here?

The agricultural industry has been deemed the most dangerous industry in Australia following the release of the agricultural inquiry findings today, reporting the highest number of deaths of any industry sector.

Ms Pamela Scott's report highlights the following causes of fatalities and serious injury in WA within the agricultural industry.

- A failure to use safety equipment and personal protective equipment
- Use of unsafe methods, particularly in dealing with plant and equipment and large animals
- A lack of awareness of the location of bystanders and others working

Findings demonstrate that:

- Approximately 90 per cent of the fatalities were men
- Nearly half of the men were aged over 55

In descending order the circumstances involved:

- being crushed or struck by a tractor or other large machinery which was either being repaired or it was idling while awaiting engagement of the gears
- a quad bike crash resulting in the driver being crushed and asphyxiated, or having head or neck injury
- vehicle roll-over or crash, or a vehicle being reversed or moved and crushing an unsighted bystander
- being crushed by livestock
- falling from the roof of a shed under construction.

WorkSafe WA

You can find both the report to WorkSafe WA and the Commissioner's response at the link below.
<https://www.wa.gov.au/organisation/worksafe-commissioner/agricultural-industry-inquiry>

More information

If you would like to discuss this, or any other WHS issue, please call (08) 9316 9896, or email enquiries@processworx.com.au.



How ProcessWorx can help your business:

With over 10 years of experience working with small businesses, ProcessWorx knows the importance of understanding and protecting your business from ongoing changes to the Industrial Relations landscape, while ensuring you remain compliant.

If you need assistance implementing any changes in your business or would like a review of your current workforce planning and contracts, please contact ProcessWorx and we can assist you with your IR compliance.

If you would like more information about Industrial Relations for your business, please contact ProcessWorx on **(08) 9316 9896** or email enquiries@processworx.com.au