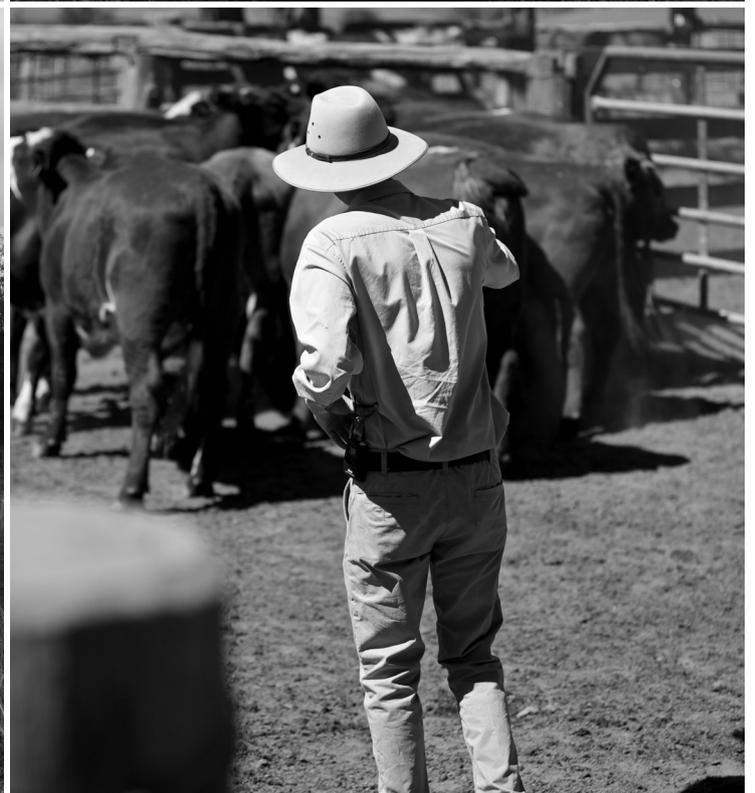
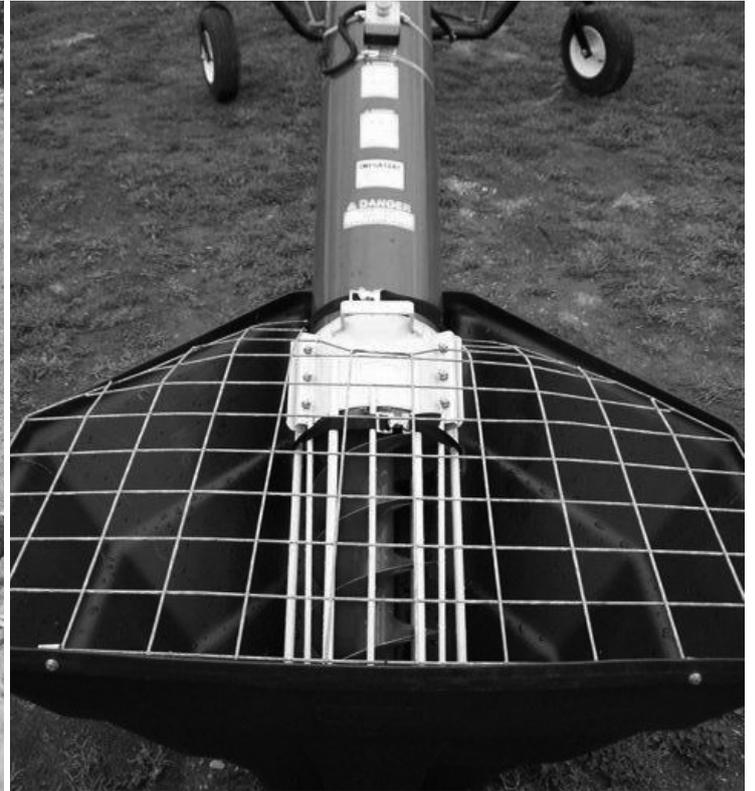


AGRICULTURE

WORK HEALTH AND SAFETY SECTOR PLAN



MINISTER'S MESSAGE

FOREWORD

The farming sector is critical to the NSW economy. Agricultural production¹ in NSW was worth \$12.1 billion in 2014/15, representing close to a quarter (23%) of agricultural production nationally (\$53.6 billion). The highest value² commodities are cattle and calves (\$2.3 billion), closely followed by wheat (\$2 billion), and wool (\$0.9 billion)*. Approximately 80,900³ workers were employed in the Agriculture, Fishing and Forestry industry in 2015.

Workers in the agriculture sector are at far greater risk⁴ of being killed or injured at work than most. While farmers make up just a small fraction of our total workforce, they make up a large number of workplace deaths and serious injuries. Farms often have the added complexity of being both workplace and home to the families that run them.

Hard work and commitment from peak bodies, associations and community leaders, farmers and farm workers supported by government efforts, has in recent years successfully addressed a number of significant issues within the sector such as deaths from tractor rollovers, improving the quality and safety of agricultural plant, improving silo design, improving shearing shed safety and raising awareness of power take off hazards. Major workers compensation claims and worker deaths have steadily declined⁵ over the years however progress has been slow and is now showing signs of plateauing. Too many people continue to be injured and killed on farms, requiring renewed efforts to continue to reduce deaths and serious injuries.

The Agriculture Work Health and Safety Sector Plan ('The plan') seeks the commitment of industry, supported by the NSW Government through SafeWork NSW, to take responsibility for delivering safer and healthier workplaces. This plan will guide the development of practical initiatives to manage risk and drive down the numbers of people being killed and injured, in turn reducing the far reaching impact these tragedies have on close-knit rural families, communities and workplaces.

In these action areas, this plan identifies what will be progressed to bring about change.

I commend the efforts of those involved in developing this plan and look forward to seeing a collective effort in bringing it to reality.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Matt Kean".

The Hon. Matt Kean MP
Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation, Member for Hornsby

AGRICULTURE AS A PRIORITY INDUSTRY – AUSTRALIAN WORK HEALTH AND SAFETY STRATEGY 2012 - 2022

The agriculture industry is a focus area of the Australian Work Health and Safety Strategy⁶ 2012-2022 due to the sector's high rates of death, injury and disease. Farming accounts⁷ for one in every five worker deaths while making up just 2.6 per cent of the Australian workforce.

HOW DOES NSW COMPARE FROM A NATIONAL PERSPECTIVE?

The true cost of injury and illness may be even higher, as certain diseases can take a long time to appear. Injury and illness also impact families and communities, particularly when children and young people are involved in farming incidents.

Between⁸ 2010 and 2014 the NSW agriculture sector had the most worker deaths of all Australian states and territories (62 deaths) and the fourth highest fatality rate when comparing all agricultural fatalities by jurisdiction. The annual cost⁹ of injuries was \$31 million. Anecdotal evidence suggests that injuries within the industry are significantly underreported meaning this number could be much higher.

INDUSTRY CONSULTATION AND IDENTIFYING HIGH IMPACT HARMS

To guide the development of the Agriculture Work Health and Safety Sector Plan, a program of workshops was held with industry representatives and farmers.

Industry determined that the plan should focus on an agreed list of high impact harms including:

- verifying that the death and injury data reflects the on-farm risk profile;
- identifying emerging issues at the commodity and regional level;
- identifying what practical solutions for farm managers and workers could look like;
- devising strategies to assist farmers achieve a minimum safety standard on all farms (safety landscape);
- describing what practical regulation looks like for farmers;
- providing ideas as to how SafeWork NSW can better support farmers and farm workers to improve farm safety.

TOWARDS ZERO

Additionally, there was majority support for focussing on a small number of harms that continue to be overrepresented in causing fatalities and serious injuries. These include not wearing helmets on quad bikes, tractors without rollover protection (ROPs), and unguarded power take off drives (PTOs) and auger intakes. Industry was clear that the current acceptance of these easily addressed harms does not match the values and attitudes of the modern professional farmer. Action is required to eliminate or significantly reduce these harms. Accordingly, work will be undertaken to:

- make the wearing of helmets on quad bikes an accepted practice;
- fit ROPs to all tractors;
- ensure all PTO drives used on farms are guarded;
- guard all auger intakes.



CURRENT SNAPSHOT OF THE AGRICULTURE SECTOR

CLAIMS

The Agriculture Sector has a higher **percentage of major claims** resulting in one week or more off work when compared to all NSW industries¹⁰

Hazardous manual tasks, falls and being hit by an animal or object are the **most common causes** of work related injuries



Farm workers and shearers are the occupations that experience **higher than average exposure** to injury

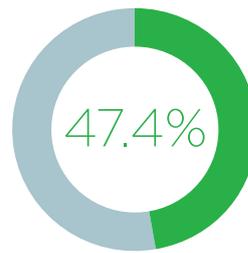
The **20-29 year** age group are responsible for 29% of all workers compensation claims

The **45-54 year** age group experience the highest time away from work due to a work related injury

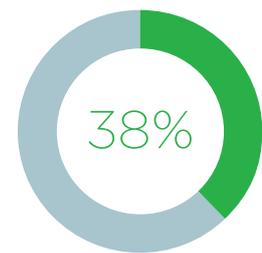
The Agriculture Sector has a higher **average cost** for each workers compensation claim when compared to all NSW industries¹¹

\$24,000
Agriculture

\$17,000
All Industries



Agriculture



All Industries

Workers in the Agriculture Sector experience more **time away from work** as a result of a workers compensation claim when compared to all NSW industries¹²

8.3 weeks
Agriculture

7 weeks
All Industries

FATALITIES

45 workers have died in the Agriculture sector between 2011 and 2016¹³

The most **prevalent causes** of a fatality are vehicle rollover or, being hit by a moving or falling object¹⁴



Tractors, Agricultural equipment and quad bikes are **responsible for the majority** of farm related fatalities¹⁵



The Sheep & Beef Cattle sector continues to suffer **the most fatalities**¹⁶



Livestock farmers and plant operators are the **most at risk worker type**¹⁷



In NSW, the highest number of horse related workers compensation claims for injury resulted from being **hit by, or falling from a horse**¹⁸

ACTION AREA I - EMBEDDING A HEALTH AND SAFETY LANDSCAPE

The Work Health and Safety Roadmap for NSW 2022 (“The Roadmap”)¹⁹ first action area incorporates the concept of a health and safety landscape. A landscape is a framework that will guide farmers in putting in place a basic safety management system. This will help keep those working or living on the farm safe. It is designed to be simple, practical and affordable and to maximise the value of efforts to improve safety and can be included in your broader farm management plan.

SafeWork NSW will be working closely with the farming sector to develop materials that will guide farming businesses in what a landscape could look like and how to implement such a plan. We commit to working with and supporting the sector to achieve this.

WHAT MIGHT A HEALTH AND SAFETY LANDSCAPE LOOK LIKE ON A FARM?

The five elements of the health and safety landscape together with industry-suggested examples are:

- **Leadership from the top:** farm managers and leaders are always being observed and need to lead by example. They can visibly demonstrate their commitment to safety by doing things like ensuring they wear their helmet when riding quad bikes, taking unsafe machinery out of service immediately until repaired, or encouraging the reporting of safety issues.
- **Organisational safety capability and practices:** the farm has set rules and procedures on how to do things safely which are not deviated from.
- **Consultation and communication:** farm managers involve workers in discussions about health and safety. Communications are regular, easy to understand and issues followed up.
- **Safe environment:** farm workers are provided with safe machinery, facilities and protective equipment. Both workers, physical health and mental health is considered. Farmers work with their supply chains to buy in the lowest risk products (eg least toxic chemicals).
- **Worker capability:** all workers, particularly those that are new or inexperienced are appropriately trained and supervised to do the job safely.

IMPROVE RECOVERY AT WORK PRACTICES

Agriculture sector data indicates that there needs to be improvement in practices to return injured or ill workers back to work quickly in a way that is best for them and the farming enterprise. On average²⁰, injured or ill agricultural workers are taking longer than most other industries to return to work.

SafeWork NSW and industry agree to:

- increase the awareness and uptake of vocational and equipment and workplace modification programs within the agriculture sector;
- upskill the SafeWork NSW Inspectorate to ensure they are aware of agriculture specific recovery at work solutions;
- upskill medical and allied health providers to understand on and off farm options for returning injured farm workers to work; and
- disseminate to farmers case studies that show how recovery at work strategies can be implemented.

SafeWork NSW will:

- work with the State Insurance Regulatory Authority (SIRA) to improve practices to support injured or ill workers in returning to work and reducing the costs associated with each claim; and
- consider options to recognise farms that implement a safety landscape to acknowledge effort.

We will know we are on track if:

- time away from work has a decreasing trend; and
- the average cost of claims and time lost from injury or illness continues to decrease.

CASE STUDY

A farm hand was kicked by a cow and sustained a left knee injury whilst at work. Following medical advice it was determined that the worker would need 6-8 weeks for recovery and treatment. The Insurer engaged a rehabilitation provider to assist the employer to identify suitable duties. Whilst the worker was unable to complete some of their typical work duties such as shearing, operating the tractor and working with livestock, they were able to return to work within 2 weeks completing duties such as monitoring and maintaining fences, spraying weeds and lawn maintenance.

The worker gradually added more duties as recovery progressed and was soon back at work completing all pre-injury duties.

ACTION AREA II – FOCUS ON KEY PRIORITY AREAS

The Roadmap's second Action Area focuses on key priority areas where the most significant work health and safety risks exist. Consultation with industry identified specific high-risk harms that need to be addressed in farming workplaces and factors that may contribute to poor safety outcomes. Participants also agreed to identify and promote resources that are currently working well in all key priority areas, and to share these with industry.

REGIONAL, LOCALISED AND EMERGING HARMS

During industry consultation, regional, localised and emerging risk areas were identified at both the sector and commodity level and included in the list of high impact harms in Action Area II.

AT-RISK WORKERS

Greater numbers of workers from diverse backgrounds present unique safety risks due to varying levels of literacy and numeracy, age and experience. Factors that increase their exposure to harm include poor English language skills, being vulnerable to exploitation, and valuing job security over health and safety. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the growing use of labour hire could also contribute to increased risk.

The Roadmap has identified four at-risk groups:

- workers from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds;
- migrant workers;
- young workers (14-25); and
- workers engaged through labour hire organisations.

SafeWork NSW has committed to conducting research and engagement with stakeholders to better understand the Work, Health and Safety (WHS) challenges faced by these at-risk worker groups and inform the development of initiatives to improve health and safety outcomes.

Initial challenges will be further considered with the agricultural sector.

SafeWork NSW has committed to conducting research and engagement with stakeholders to measure improvements in health and safety outcomes for at-risk workers. Findings will be used to inform initiatives to increase the safety of at-risk workers.

QUAD BIKES

Quad bikes are a leading cause of deaths and serious injuries on farms, mostly from being crushed by an overturned machine or head injuries from not wearing helmets. Children and older people are most at risk.

SafeWork NSW and industry agree to promote:

- safer vehicles on-farms (ie side-by-side vehicles (SSVs));
- retrofitting engineered Operator Protective Devices (OPDs) to existing quad bikes;
- the availability of helmets for on-farm use and the importance of wearing them;
- the need for training and its benefits regardless of experience;
- following of manufacturer's instructions (eg appropriate fitting of accessories and load limits); and
- no child under 16 operates or rides as a passenger on adult size quad bikes.

SafeWork NSW will:

- work with state and federal agencies to work towards the introduction of a consumer safety rating system for quad bikes and SSVs;
- promote the need to wear helmets;
- work with emergency services to collect information to support harm prevention strategies;
- work with the supply chain; and
- work with NSW Health to increase correlation of notification data.

We will know we are on track if:

- worker deaths and serious injuries from quad bikes decline by 20% and 30% respectively by 2022 using agricultural specific baseline data (2011/12 to 2015/16);
- percentage of farm quad bike operators who have completed accredited training increases (20% by 2020 and 50% by 2022);
- farm quad bike operators who wear helmets increase (20% by 2018, 60% by 2020 and 90% by 2022);
- the number of farms using SSV's continues to increase according to a market research data where available; and
- dealerships that demonstrate systematic support for safe purchasing decisions continue to increase.

CASE STUDY

I was in a quad bike incident that could have cost me my life. I hit a piece of wood hidden in the long grass. The quad bike rolled over the top of me, injuring my hip, shoulder, wrist and ribs. Luckily I am alive today, but the incident continues to impact my life and work on the farm. After all of this, we purchased a side-by-side vehicle (SSV). In hindsight, I wish I had done this 10 years ago. The SSV has cut down the use of our quad bike and thanks to its versatility, it is now the vehicle of choice on our farm.

MENTAL HEALTH

Living and working in isolation, challenging financial and environmental factors and poor access to support services contribute to poor mental health.

The impact and consequence of mental health issues is borne not only on the farmer, but by family and friends as well. Preventing and managing the risk factors is an essential part of staying safe and productive.

SafeWork NSW has released the NSW Workplace Mental Health Capability Benchmarking Tool and Survey Report, which include baseline data specific to the agricultural sector based on their capability to create mentally healthy workplaces.

In November 2017, a summit of mental health experts will co-design the Mentally Healthy Workplaces in NSW Strategy 2022 and Work Program 2018-22.

SafeWork NSW will:

- work with other agencies and rural mental health networks to find practical ways to support preventative and educational mental health activities, with particular focus on remote and isolated agricultural communities; and
- implement relevant actions from the Strategy, to create mentally healthy workplaces for agricultural communities.

We will know if we are on track if:

- more agricultural workplaces are taking effective action, as defined by the benchmarking tool, to improve mental health in the workplace, including achieving targets set following the mental health summit.

WORKING WITH ANIMALS

The unpredictability of livestock, inexperienced workers, interactions during husbandry practices, loading and unloading livestock, and inadequate or poorly maintained yards, races, gates and crushes, are the leading causes of harm.

SafeWork NSW and industry agree to:

- support industry to develop and promote case studies on innovative solutions to manage the risks of injury to farm workers and livestock carriers while loading and unloading livestock; and
 - support industry to raise awareness of Q fever and Zoonosis.
- promote the need and benefits of training in safe animal handling practices for all farmworkers, particularly inexperienced workers;
- promote the requirement to ensure yards, races, gates and crushes are maintained and incorporate safe design principles (eg escape routes);
- support the equine industry in embedding the Code of Practice, *Managing risks when new or inexperienced riders or handlers interact with horses in the workplace*; and
- work with emergency services to collect information to support harm prevention strategies.

We will know we are on track if:

- major claims caused by being hit by an animal drop 20% by 2022 using baseline data specific to the Agricultural sector 2011/12 to 2015/16; and
- well-equipped and maintained yards, races, gates and crushes identified during SafeWork NSW site visits increase over time.

FALLS FROM HEIGHTS

The main causes of fall related death and injury are from silos, windmills, buildings, and farm machinery during maintenance and harvest activities.

SafeWork NSW and industry agree:

- SafeWork NSW will engage with manufacturers to ensure new silos are designed to incorporate ground level working devices to reduce the need to work at heights;
- industry supported by SafeWork NSW will initiate a communications strategy to raise awareness of the risks of working at heights and the various controls to minimise risks; and
- SafeWork NSW will engage with manufacturers to ensure that machinery is designed and equipped to eliminate or significantly reduce fall risks associated with access during maintenance or harvest operations.

We will know we are on track if:

- by 2018, 100% of all new silos for sale are fitted with ground level working devices, minimising the need to work at heights;
- silos on farms with ground level working devices and/or working at heights risk controls fitted increases when inspected during SafeWork NSW site visits; and
- by 2022, serious claims caused by falls from heights drop by 30% using agricultural specific baseline data (2013/14 to 2015/16).

ELECTRIC SHOCKS/ ELECTROCUTIONS

Contact with overhead power lines by harvesters, grain augers, field bins and irrigation equipment continues to be a problem. Workshops, shearing sheds, pump and generator facilities are often not fitted with Residual Current Devices (RCDs) commonly known as safety switches.

SafeWork NSW and industry agree to:

- promote mandatory requirements for Earth Leakage Protection Devices (ELPD's), also referred to as Residual Current Devices (RCD's), to be fitted to electrical circuits or portable type to be used in conjunction with plugin type equipment that is used in farm workshops and other infrastructure.

SafeWork NSW will:

- engage with energy providers to develop and promote safe practices and the use of visual aids to avoid contact with overhead power lines and develop education tools that highlight typical farming risks and practical solutions.

We will know we are on track if:

- RCDs fitted to farm infrastructure where required (inspected during SafeWork NSW site visits) increases over time; and
- overhead power line strikes by agricultural machinery as reported by energy providers decreases over time.

HAZARDOUS CHEMICALS

Exposure during decanting, mixing or general application of chemicals as well as poor storage can lead to injury and illness. Lack of information may also be contributing to harm.

SafeWork NSW will:

- work with state and federal agencies to identify chemicals that are posing the highest risk to farm workers and improve communications of their health risks and better controls;

- engage with regional farm chemical manufacturers, importers and suppliers to ensure that they are meeting their obligations when supplying to farms; and
- in partnership with other government agencies and community organisations collectively identify and address gaps in industry guidance materials for the farming community related to safe chemical selection, storage, handling, use and disposal.

We will know we are on track if:

- manufacturers, importers and suppliers who are meeting their obligations identified during SafeWork NSW site visits increase;
- farms that have compliant storage, handling, use and disposal practices in place identified during SafeWork NSW site visits increase;
- the number of manufacturers, importers and suppliers that are aware of and complying with Globally Harmonised System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (GHS) obligations increase.

MACHINE GUARDING

Power Take Off (PTO) drive shafts, auger intakes, harvesting machinery and post drivers are a major cause of harm and injury.

SafeWork NSW and industry agree to:

- raise awareness of the need to manage the risks associated with farm machinery with a focus on augers, PTO's, and post drivers; and
- promote best practice solutions.

SafeWork NSW will:

- engage with suppliers to ensure that plant and equipment sold for use on farms is safe;
- use its powers to require PTO shafts and intakes augers are adequately guarded and roll over protection structures (ROPs) are fitted to tractors and other mobile plant.

We will know we are on track if:

- agricultural plant and equipment for sale in dealerships by 2022 is found to be meeting appropriate guarding standards when inspected; and
- there is an increase in the number of farms that are compliant in relation to the management of harms associated with PTO shafts and intake augers.

DISEASES

The health and safety of farmers and farm workers can be impacted by diseases spread by animals and sun exposure.

SafeWork NSW and industry agree to:

- promote practical on-farm sun safety and controls for diseases spread by animals, for example Q fever.

SafeWork NSW will:

- Look for opportunities to partner with other government agencies and industry organisations to talk to farmers about these issues, with particular focus on remote and isolated agricultural communities.

We will know we are on track if:

- participation in the NSW Skin Cancer Prevention Working Group with a focus on rural and remote areas increases year on year.

MUSCULOSKELETAL

Working with animals, feeding stock and maintenance activities all contribute to musculoskeletal injuries. The ageing workforce is a contributing factor to incidence rates.

SafeWork NSW and industry agree to:

- partner with SIRA to improve insurer and health provider practices to reduce the cost and duration of claims for injured farm workers;
- develop initiatives designed specifically for ageing farmers that prevent musculoskeletal injuries, support recovery and make work easier;
- raise awareness of the on-farm issues leading to musculoskeletal injuries and the types of practical controls that can be implemented on farm to reduce harm; and
- work with industry sectors where data is suggesting that intervention is required to improve safety performance. An example of this is the shearing sector which has an average time loss of 18 weeks per claim which is over twice the industry average.

We will know we are on track if:

- there is a reduction in the number of musculoskeletal injuries by 2022; and
- specific sector intervention strategies based on data to improve safety performance has been developed. An example of this is the shearing sector which has an average time loss of 18 weeks per claim which is over twice the industry average.



ACTION AREA III – EXEMPLAR REGULATOR

The Roadmap's third Action Area commits SafeWork NSW to set an example as a leading regulator to support Action Areas I and II.

Accordingly, SafeWork NSW will work to ensure that the following is achieved over the next six years:

- continue to build a customer-focused approach to the way we work with agribusiness;
- build the capability of our frontline officers by partnering with industry on industry based training programs in order to better understand the risks on-farm and provide better advice, assistance and engagement with farmers;
- continue to work with other agencies to improve collection of data and information sharing to inform future harm prevention activities; and
- work to better understand the relationship between death and injury rates on farms and the human behaviours and decision making that may contribute to them by applying human centred design principles.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The monitoring and evaluation process helps us to continuously improve and is important to check the effectiveness of strategies. It is also necessary to ensure that the plan is being rolled out as intended and that changes in the reduction of incidents are in line with our targets.

SafeWork NSW and industry will review this sector plan every two years and commit to work together to check its progress, consider changes or new opportunities, and ensure new or commodity specific harms are identified and addressed.

The monitoring and evaluation process will include SafeWork NSW, industry partners and an industry reference group, using a range of measures including data analysis, information from other agencies and stakeholder feedback.



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