



Australian Dairy Industry Council Inc.

Media Release

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Culture shift essential to improve health, safety and well-being in dairy

For Immediate Release

To achieve the dairy industry's well-being targets, the Australian Dairy Industry Council (ADIC) says health, safety and well-being must become part of the everyday conversation and practice across the dairy value chain.

Addressing an audience of dairy farmers, manufacturers and industry leaders at the ADIC's Business Breakfast with the theme *'Protecting what matters: ensuring the health, safety and well-being of our people'* in Melbourne today, ADIC Chair Simone Jolliffe said to live up to this and retain a highly skilled workforce a culture shift is required.

"Dairy farms are not typical workplaces. There are many potential risks, and stressful situations – particularly because we are often operating in a family environment, where there is the added pressure of the day-to-day challenges of running a small business," Mrs Jolliffe said.

"Dairy Australia is already working with state safety regulators and dairy manufacturers to provide farmers with the tools and training they need to operate safely. As an industry we need to work more collaboratively to ensure uptake and implementation, to move the workforce from 'knowing' to 'doing'."

The Dairy Industry's Sustainability Framework has set targets for the industry to achieve by 2020. One of the targets is 100% of on-farm and manufacturing workers to have completed Occupational Health & Safety training by 2020. A further target is zero workplace fatalities. Mrs Jolliffe said the industry is falling behind on both accounts.

"Tragically there have already been two confirmed workplace fatalities in our industry this year. Workplace injuries have also risen. Across Australia, one in five people are suffering with mental health challenges. This is not acceptable. We need to lead the industry in prioritising health, safety and well-being – for the benefit of our industry."

Guests also heard from an expert panel including Dairy Australia's Program Manager for Industry Workforce Planning and Action, Bill Youl, Worksafe Victoria's Bruce Gibson, Lion's Leader for Safety and Well-being Josh Norton, Field Services Manager at Fonterra Robyn Mitchard and Director of the National Centre for Farmer Health, Dr Susan Brumby.

A key focus of the panel discussion was highlighting the benefits that implementing a formal occupational health and safety plan can provide. Bill Youl observed that, as well as being the right things to do, safeguarding the workforce makes sense for farm profitability.

"A safe work environment will ensure accidents are minimised, productivity is enhanced and the full benefits of farm and manufacturing facilities realised. Our physical and mental well-being is intrinsically linked to our industry's success," Mr Youl said.

The ADIC made a commitment at the breakfast to drive change across the industry through improved collaboration between service providers, processors and industry representative bodies.

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The Australian Dairy Industry Council (ADIC) is the dairy industry's peak policy body. It co-ordinates industry's policy and represents all sectors of the industry on national and international issues through its two constituent bodies, Australian Dairy Farmers Ltd (ADF) and the Australian Dairy Products Federation (ADPF).

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