

COMMUNIQUE

Rural Industry Sector Standing Committee

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The Rural Industry Standing Committee (the Committee) met on 17 April 2024. The Chair, Associate Professor Kelly Johnstone, welcomed Committee members to the first meeting.

The Chair facilitated discussions focused on establishing a foundation for the Committee's three-year term including:

- Endorsing the Committee's terms of reference, a key governance document that has been developed to support the operations of the Committee; and
- Identifying the reporting requirements to undertake Committee functions; noting the primary function of an Industry Sector Standing Committee is to give advice and make recommendations to the Work Health and Safety board about work health and safety in the industry sector for which the committee is established (Work Health and Safety Act 2011, Schedule 2, Division 5, Section 15).

The Chair invited the committee members to discuss the current and emerging issues and risks in the rural industry. The following key matters were raised by the Committee members:

- Worker shortages, including an ageing workforce, fatigue and the need for constant training of the new workforce
- Psychosocial hazards and mental health
- Alcohol and drug abuse
- Culture change with regard to safety
- Rebate on Quad bike – Qld vs other states
- Natural Disasters – Climate Change/heat stress
- Forestry - Equipment (e.g., hydraulic) maintenance, Public recreational use, long commute etc
- Chemical spraying – Proximity to workers
- Workforce – English as second language

The Members discussed items for future meetings including the feasibility of sector breakdown for data reports and availability of data on psychosocial complaints.

The next meeting of the Committee will be held on Wednesday, 29 May 2024.