

Media Release



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Disappointment over workplace manslaughter legislation

The Victorian Farmers Federation is disappointed with the passing of the State Government's workplace manslaughter legislation without amendment last night.

Ms Germano said "Workplace safety is a priority for every farming business; however the legislation that has passed through the parliament may lead to perverse safety outcomes."

The Victorian Farmers Federation submitted well-thought amendments to the legislation that would have achieved greater fairness across all workplaces, but also led to improvements in safety standards.

"It is disappointing that the government has ignored the calls of all the employer organisations who were united in their calling for the laws to apply to employees, adequate protections for family business and the same legal standards under the criminal code to be extended to workplace manslaughter," said Ms Germano.

The key recommendation of the VFF was to exempt family businesses from the legislation. The intent of the exemption was to provide peace of mind to family members by way of protecting a person from prosecution in the instance a family member tragically died in a workplace accident.

The government outlined during the debate that the Department of Public Prosecutions had prosecutorial discretion as to which cases should be subjected to the new workplace manslaughter legislation.

Ms Germano said "this offered little confidence to agricultural community who remain fearful of being subjected to a long, expensive and emotional legal process when a family are mourning the tragic loss of a loved one."

The Victorian Farmers Federation thanks fellow employer organisations, their respective memberships and parliamentarians who were supportive of our calls for safer workplaces across Victoria.

"The VFF remains committed to improving workplace standards across rural and regional Victoria, and will continue to work with industry, government and key stakeholders to ensure employees and families remain safe while at work," said Ms Germano

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