

Robyn Preston MP
Member for Hawkesbury



The Hon. Kevin Anderson MP
Minister for Better Regulation &
Innovation

MEDIA RELEASE

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IMPROVING THE HEALTH AND SAFETY OF HAWKESBURY'S FARMERS

The impacts of an increasingly variable climate on the mental health and workplace safety of farmers is the subject of a new study by the NSW Government, Member for Hawkesbury, Robyn Preston MP and Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation, The Hon. Kevin Anderson MP announced today.

Ms Preston and Mr Anderson today toured Canoelands Orchard in Canoelands to announce the study.

“The Hawkesbury Harvest Farm Gate Trail is the jewel in Sydney’s agricultural crown and not just for the incredible array of produce, but because of its reputation as a leader in sustainable and ecological farming,” Ms Preston said.

“However, our farmers here in Hawkesbury are increasingly vulnerable to the effects of a variable climate”.

“Although many farmers are adapting to the challenges and adopting more sustainable practices, the Government needs to better understand the work health and safety risks that come with these changes.

“This new research project will help us better understand how farming diversification, technological advancements and new models of farm ownership and management will contribute to work health and safety outcomes now and in the longer term.”

Mr Anderson said in addition to identifying risk and reward, the study will gather evidence from farmers across NSW who have adopted sustainable land management practices and/or alternative farming systems and find out about their experiences.

“Our farmers are the first ones to be affected by changes in rainfall and extreme heat and after a difficult few years, they’ve had to start doing things differently,” Mr Anderson said.

“Whether responding to climate variation by choice or necessity, it’s driving technology and behaviour change, which in turn impacts the work health and safety landscape across NSW.

“The challenge now is to work out what is and isn’t safer, either for physical or mental health and to get on the front foot to manage new and emerging risks in sustainable farming.

“Farmers are already overrepresented in workplace injuries and fatalities, so climate-motivated changes really need to be accompanied by scrutiny of what is and isn’t going to add to these risks.

“Research into this area is going to be able to help future-proof farming and drive down the rates of death, serious injury and illness.”

More information is available on the Centre for Work Health and Safety [website](#).

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