

**-FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE-**

**19 November 2020**

**THINKING HARVEST? THINK ROAD SAFETY AND FATIGUE**

With harvest looming, Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council (CGRC), is asking farmers, grain harvest contractors and truck drivers to put in place plans to combat fatigue during this busy time.

The NSW Centre for Road Safety states, "Driver fatigue is one of the top three contributors to the road toll. Research has shown that fatigue can be as dangerous as other road safety issues, such as drink driving. Fatigue-related crashes are twice as likely to be fatal - drivers who are asleep can't brake. From 2013 to 2017, more people in NSW died in fatigue-related crashes than drink driving crashes. Being awake for about 17 hours has a similar effect on performance as a blood alcohol content (BAC) of 0.05".

During harvest worker fatigue can be a dangerous issue and CGRC is asking all who are involved in this year's grain harvest to learn about and recognize the symptoms of worker fatigue. These symptoms include forgetfulness, reduced vigilance, poor communication, poor decision-making, slower reaction times, and irritability. Driving behaviours that suggest fatigue can be lane drift, rapid blinking, yawning, lack of recall of where you have just been, being surprised by a vehicle passing you. These behaviours can indicate when to STOP driving or take a break.

Think about how you can schedule breaks throughout the day (and for some workers at night), inform workers of the symptoms of fatigue so they can recognize when to take a break.

Stay safe in the workplace by having a good supply of safety equipment on hand including PPE (personal protective equipment), discuss safety and hazards in the workplace, ensure that workers stay hydrated and eat properly throughout the day and are dressing appropriately for weather conditions. The amount of sleep that a worker gets has a direct correlation to the potential for injuries. Incident rates for workers receiving less than five hours of sleep per night are nearly triple to those who receive eight hours of sleep per night.

It is the obligation of all grain growers, transport contractors and grain receivers to ensure trucks are legally loaded and to take all reasonable steps to prevent driver fatigue. Significant penalties may apply for participating in, or failing to discourage, breaches of the Chain of Responsibility – (COR) legislation.

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