

March 2026

Welcome to Workplace Horizon’s newsletter for March 2026, to SA Dairyfarmers members. If you have any newsletter topic suggestions please don’t hesitate to contact us. Your feedback is also welcome! We trust you find the information useful.



We are very excited to announce that our new website is now live and can be accessed via www.wphorizons.com.au. We encourage you to familiarise yourself with our range of services detailed on the website.

Our next newsletter update will also include a specific link for SA Dairyfarmers Association members which you will also be able to access our newsletters and updates on our website.

Please don’t hesitate to contact us with any questions. We look forward to receiving your feedback!



FARM SAFETY - QUAD BIKES AND MOTORBIKES

Quad bikes and motorbikes are essential equipment on many Australian farms, but they also continue to pose some of the highest risks of injury and fatality in agricultural work. South Australia has seen a troubling spike in quad bike and ATV-related incidents, highlighting the need for heightened awareness and safe practices across all farming communities.

The National Picture

Australia records around 15 quad bike-related deaths and 1,400 serious injuries every year, with more than 200 fatalities since 2011. Rollovers remain the leading danger, responsible for over half of all quad bike deaths, often due to crush injuries from bikes weighing up to 400 kg.

[\[safework.sa.gov.au\]](http://safework.sa.gov.au), [\[agrifutures.com.au\]](http://agrifutures.com.au)

South Australia

- Five ATV fatalities occurred in 2024, the first in SA since 2021. [\[safework.sa.gov.au\]](http://safework.sa.gov.au), [\[safetydocs...ulture.com\]](http://safetydocs...ulture.com)

- In early 2025, another fatality occurred when an SSV rolled on a Mid Murray farming property, bringing SA's total ATV death toll to 11 since 2011. [\[safework.sa.gov.au\]](#), [\[safetydocs...ulture.com\]](#)
- Several 2024 fatalities involved quad bike rollovers in the Adelaide Hills, Whites Flat, Port Broughton, and the Riverland regions all occurring on private agricultural properties. [\[abc.net.au\]](#)

Risk Behaviours Identified by SafeWork SA

SafeWork SA highlights several dangerous behaviours commonly linked to injuries and fatalities in SA:

- Bypassing seatbelt and speed limiting features, especially in SSVs. [\[safework.sa.gov.au\]](#)
- Riding without seatbelts, despite being fitted, significantly increases rollover fatalities. [\[abc.net.au\]](#)
- Tampering with safety controls, such as clipping seatbelts behind the rider to override limiters. [\[safework.sa.gov.au\]](#)

Wider Farm Injury Trends

National farm injury data also indicates worsening conditions. In 2024, Australia saw 72 on-farm deaths and 133 serious injuries, more than double the previous year's toll. Quad bikes and SSVs were the leading agents of fatal injury. [\[agrifutures.com.au\]](#), [\[dairynews...lia.com.au\]](#)

Key Risk Factors

- **Rollovers** remain the top hazard, responsible for over 50% of fatalities. [\[safework.sa.gov.au\]](#), [\[abc.net.au\]](#)
- **Lack of training**, often leading to poor technique or unsafe decisions. [\[safework.sa.gov.au\]](#)
- **Unsafe terrain and speed**, especially on steep, uneven, or slippery ground. [\[safework.sa.gov.au\]](#)
- **Children using adult-sized bikes**, despite being the highest-risk age group. [\[agrifutures.com.au\]](#)
- **Insufficient protective gear**, particularly not wearing helmets. [\[agrifutures.com.au\]](#)
- **Unbalanced loads or carrying passengers**, which destabilise the vehicle. [\[safework.sa.gov.au\]](#)
- **Improper modifications**, including disabling safety features. [\[safework.sa.gov.au\]](#)

Legal Requirements and Safety Standards

Under the Consumer Goods (Quad Bikes) Safety Standard 2019, all new and imported second-hand quad bikes must:

- Meet international safety and stability standards.
- Display tip angles and rollover warnings.
- Include safety information in the manual.
- From October 2021 onward, all general-use quad bikes must be fitted with an Operator Protection Device (OPD) and meet minimum stability thresholds. [\[safeworkau...lia.gov.au\]](#)

These standards apply nationwide, including South Australia.

Best Practice Safety Measures for All Farms

Prioritise Training

- Provide structured induction and competency-based training for anyone operating quad bikes or motorbikes.
- Ensure young or inexperienced riders only use age-appropriate vehicles.

Choose the Right Vehicle

- Consider whether a **side-by-side vehicle (SSV)** or small utility motorbike might be safer for the task.
- Ensure all quad bikes used on farm meet the mandatory safety standard and have a compliant OPD.

Invest in Protective Gear

- Helmets are essential, even a “quick job” can result in a catastrophic rollover or collision.
- Use sturdy boots, gloves, and eye protection.

Manage Terrain and Speed

- Avoid steep slopes where possible.
- Reduce speed in unfamiliar or rough areas.
- Never overload the bike with cargo or passengers.

Enforce Child Safety

- Do not allow children under 16 on adult-sized bikes.
- Provide child-appropriate alternatives (e.g., small two-wheel bikes) if necessary.

Use Reliable Resources

- SafeWork SA offers practical guidance, hazard management information, and quad bike safety resources. [\[safetydocs...ulture.com\]](https://safetydocs.safeworksa.gov.au/)

A Culture of Safety Saves Lives

The recent rise in quad bike and SSV fatalities in South Australia shows that **safety must remain a top priority** on all farms, at all times. Although improvements in design standards and protective devices are helping reduce risk, incidents are still too common, and even experienced riders are vulnerable.

Safety technologies, proper training, and consistent safe riding practices can significantly reduce risks. With quad bikes and motorbikes remaining essential tools on many farms, adopting a proactive safety culture is one of the most powerful steps farming communities can take to protect lives.

Additional links: [Quad bike safety | ACCC Product Safety](#) [SafeWork SA Quad Bikes](#)

PAYDAY SUPERANNUATION REMINDER

From 1 July 2026, all employers will be required to pay superannuation at the same time as wages or salaries, replacing the current quarterly payment model.

Under the new rules, each pay cycle will trigger a seven (7) day deadline for super contributions to be processed and received by employees' super funds. Missing this deadline will result in the Superannuation Guarantee Charge (SGC) becoming payable immediately from the next calendar day, including daily compounding interest on any shortfall.

This represents a major shift in employer obligations as the change affects systems, cash flow forecasting, and payroll workflows. We strongly recommend that all members commence the following actions.

Start trialling payday superannuation processes now

- Test your payroll software to ensure it can automate or support superannuation payments aligned to each pay run.
- Speak with your payroll provider or bookkeeper to understand any updates or configuration changes required.
- Review internal approval timelines so superannuation can be finalised and submitted within the seven day window.

Review cash flow and budgeting

- Moving from quarterly to frequent super payments will impact working capital. Begin modelling now for FY27 to avoid surprises.

Prepare for increased employee visibility

More frequent super payments may lead to an increase in employee questions. Consider:

- Updating payslip layouts to show superannuation timing more clearly.
- Communicate the upcoming changes to staff to manage expectations.



PAID PARENTAL LEAVE - HOW DOES AUSTRALIA STACK UP?

Over the past three years, the federal government has been incrementally expanding the Commonwealth Paid Parental Leave scheme. The final scheduled step is in July 2026, when the entitlement increases to 26 weeks, paid at the minimum wage.

According to the OECD the average total paid parental leave entitlement across member countries is around 52.7 weeks, when paid maternity, parental and home-care leave are combined. Australia will offer 26 weeks, effectively half the OECD average duration, and at the minimum wage.

Countries such as Canada, France, Sweden, Iceland and Japan provide families with significantly longer periods of paid leave, often close to – or exceeding – a full year.

It is noteworthy that employer-funded paid parental leave is trending upwards in Australia. The Workplace Gender Equality Agency’s most recent data reports the proportion of Australian employers offering paid parental leave (in addition to the government entitlements) has continued to increase, and more organisations are adopting gender-neutral and more generous parental leave policies. Around 68 % of employers now report offering paid parental leave beyond statutory government schemes.



PREDICTIONS FROM THE RESERVE BANK AUSTRALIA (RBA) - EMPLOYMENT & WAGES GROWTH

- The latest Wage Price Index (WPI) data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), revealed a peak in the index in December 2023 quarter, with annual growth reaching 4.3%. Since then, the WPI has been gradually declining, with the September 2025 quarter reporting annual growth of 3.4%.
- By June 2028, wage growth is projected to be closer to 3%, down from mid-3s, pointing to a slow, controlled moderation in wages rather than a sharp downturn in incomes.
- The RBA
 - is expecting the WPI to ease slowly to around 3% by June 2028, pointing to a gradual moderation in wage pressures rather than an abrupt drop; and
 - is also projecting a period of continued labour market strength, followed by a slow softening rather than a sudden downturn.

The RBA is relying on higher interest rates to cool demand just enough to bring inflation back towards the target 2-3% band, without triggering a sharp rise in joblessness.

- The unemployment rate, in the near term, is expected to be “broadly stable” before it begins to creep higher as economic growth slows.
- The forecast has unemployment rising gradually to around 4.6% by mid-2028, up from the current 4.2% but still low by historical standards.

Overall, the jobs market is predicted to stay relatively tight even as unemployment edges higher and wage growth slows.

What does this mean for you and your employees?

For employers, the outlook suggests that while wage pressures remain present in the short term, they should ease gradually over the next few years. Companies that have struggled with rapidly rising labour costs may see some relief.

In the nearer term, businesses in sectors still facing skills shortages or strong demand may need to continue offering competitive wages and conditions to attract and retain staff.

For workers, unemployment is expected to rise only gradually to the mid-4s, and labour market conditions remain relatively favourable by historical standards, with the RBA projecting a still-favourable jobs market in the near term, but with pay rises gradually becoming more modest.

The RBA's latest forecasts paint a picture of an Australian labour market that stays relatively strong, even as wage growth slowly cools.



SA EXPORT BOOM

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) data reveals that SA has experienced its strongest four years on record for international trade, with \$69bn worth of local goods sold in the four years to December 31, 2025.

The figures show that each calendar year within this period eclipsed the pre-2022 record of \$13.1bn, with 2023, 2024 and 2025 each exceeding \$17bn.

Adelaide Airport airfreight and southern rock lobster experienced records for trade and there is a surging demand for beef.

This was achieved despite global trade headwinds, with market volatility caused by the introduction of tariffs and other restrictions.

SA's top five markets for 2025 were:

- China (\$3.6bn)
- US (\$2.8bn)
- India (\$1.5bn)
- Malaysia (\$1.5bn) and
- Thailand (\$742m)

It is also noted that more than 220,000 jobs in SA are linked to exports.



AUSSIE WORKERS ARE DELAYING RETIREMENT

A survey of over 2,000 Australians by Equip Super reveals the impact of the continued cost-of-living crisis and the price of financial security. It reported that on average Australians are working an extra six years. The main reasons cited for delaying retirement are:

- 43% reported cost-of-living pressures
- 25% insufficient super funds
- 18% healthcare affordability

The reports highlights that retirement is taking a back seat and the different ways people are responding:

- 21% of respondents have reduced super contributions
- another 10% have increased them

The study also revealed a growing engagement with a person's financial future, with 45% of respondents stated they have reviewed their super or retirement plan in the past 12 months.

This is not a new issue. It was reported in 2023 that the financial wellbeing of older Australians had decreased over the years, and not only were they struggling to meet lifestyle expenses, but they also expected these challenges to persist. This recent survey shows the belief has held true almost three years later.



JOBS & WAGES GROWTH JANUARY 2026

The Commonwealth Bank (CBA) has released data from its internal Labour Insights.

Jobs Growth

- Across the economy during January 2026 approximately 21,000 jobs were added.

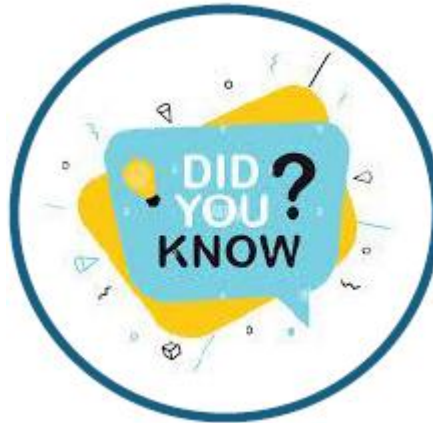
Wage Growth

CBA's wage data shows:

- Quarterly wages up 0.8% in January, with annual growth holding at 3.1%.
- Overall wage growth has remained broadly stable, although quarterly outcomes have edged higher since the middle of 2025.

Western Australia recorded the strongest gains in wage growth with 4.1% annually in January. Other States and Territories recorded:

- ACT (3.5%)
- South Australia (3.5%)
- Queensland (3.3%)
- New South Wales (3.2%)
- Victoria (3.1%)
- Tasmania (3.0%)
- Northern Territory (2.6%)



Do you have a 'Did You Know' or 'Fun Fact' to contribute?

Please don't hesitate to email Robynne at robynne@wphorizons.com.au

- The Limestone Coast region alone contributes 57% of South Australia's milk – around 281 million litres each year.
- Dairy cows can see almost 360 degrees thanks to their wide-set eyes.
- SA is participating in long-term studies investigating methane-reducing supplements given to cows during pregnancy and measuring lasting effects in offspring.

Don't forget to check out our new website 😊

www.wphorizons.com.au

If you have any questions regarding this newsletter or we can assist with your 'people needs' please don't hesitate to contact us.

We look forward to working with you.

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