ISCRR news

June 2021

Director's update

As the financial year comes to an end, I'd like to take the opportunity to recognise the significant amount of research ISCRR has delivered and facilitated in partnership with WorkSafe Victoria and our academic networks over the past 12 months. A total of 12 projects have been completed, with a further 18 underway, and over 115 outputs and presentations delivered. Our staff have remained flexible and adaptable as we emerge from Victoria's fourth lockdown, and their unyielding support for each other has been truly admirable.

We currently have nine projects underway in our external research program, most of which were commissioned by WorkSafe Victoria through their new Register of Research Providers. Coming to an end is the systems-thinking project led by Sharon Newnam, Associate Professor (Research) at The Monash University Accident Research Centre (MUARC). This project developed and piloted a prototype systems-thinking toolkit for investigating incidents of work-related violence and aggression in City Councils.

We're also working with Associate Professor Jodi Oakman, head of the Centre for Ergonomics and Human Factors at La Trobe University. Jodi is leading an evaluation of online procedures to manage the risk of both musculoskeletal and stress-related mental health disorders in the workplace.

There are also a number of internal evaluation projects underway, including two evaluations linked to the WorkSafe Victoria Clinical Services Redesign Program.

The Clinical Hotline Pilot aims to design and test a hotline phone platform for Agents and Treating Health Practitioners to directly access WorkSafe Victoria Clinical Panel support for informal queries in a timely manner. It will be evaluated for effectiveness from the perspective of the Treating Health Practitioners, Agents and Hotline Clinicians.

The Clinical Review Panel Pilot aims to inform best practice pathways for treatment, recovery, and return-to-work for injured workers through a new model of in-house multidisciplinary panel reviews. Its effectiveness will be evaluated from the perspective of participating Agent teams, the Treating Health Practitioners involved in the panel reviews, and the WorkSafe Victoria clinicians leading the reviews.

Coming to an end in August 2021 is our Literature Review on the 'Best Practices for Person-Centred Case Management'. WorkSafe Victoria is developing a new Service Model that aligns with Victorian government's objective of designing and providing human-centred services. WorkSafe Victoria seeks to improve insurance case management by implementing a person-centred case management system to help manage the recovery of injured workers.

The Literature Review aims to identify contemporary best practice case management aligned to individual needs, case manager capabilities, and benchmarking best practice in case management. The findings will be used to inform decision making regarding WorkSafe Victoria's new program.

ISCRR has also started conducting workshops to build capacity in evaluation skills. Dr Janine McMillan and Dr Sarah Oxford from our research team have been conducting evaluation workshops to assist WorkSafe Victoria groups develop program logic models.

There's always a full program of exciting research and translation activity happening at ISCRR and we have an excellent team to meet the needs of our partners. We recently welcomed Belinda Clark to the Research Team and are very pleased to have her on board.

Looking ahead to the next financial year, we have a number of new research projects in the pipeline to address current and emerging priorities in injury prevention and recovery. We look forward to continuing to deliver and support applied research that makes a difference - supporting injured workers return to health and keeping workplaces safe and healthy.

Samantha Barker

Director, ISCRR (Monash University)

Research stories

Improving training for psychologists

Understanding the WorkCover scheme can be complex for practitioners such as psychologists who have had little experience interacting with the scheme. WorkSafe Victoria, in consultation with the Australian Psychological Society, developed online webinar training for psychologists treating injured workers in Victoria.

The aim of the training was to increase the number of psychologists with scheme literacy skills and improve psychologists'

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confidence to lead appropriate and well-timed return to work conversations. To improve the current training model, WorkSafe Victoria commissioned ISCRR to analyse feedback from psychologists who participated in the webinars.

Overall, the webinars were well-received with the following feedback:

- 100% strongly agreed or agreed that the presenters were knowledgeable and that the content was relevant to their role in treating injured workers under the WorkSafe scheme.
- 96% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that the webinars delivered the information they expected to receive.

At least **three-quarters** of the respondents indicated **better understanding** of roles and responsibilities and increased awareness of workplace challenges faced by injured workers

Webinar was the preferred medium of education of the psychologists who attended. In the three-month post-webinar survey, 15 out of 19 respondents reported implementing change(s) in their treatment approach.

Safer farms

Adam Symons, an experienced farmer from Ganmain NSW, recently found himself being airlifted to hospital after his arm was completely severed in a hay baler[1]. His quick reaction to put something around his arm to stop the bleeding, and drive his tractor 400 metres to get help saved his life. He was one of the lucky ones.

Farmers and farm workers experience a disproportionately high workplace fatality and injury rate and the numbers have not changed significantly in the past decade.

Agriculture makes up about **2% of the Victorian workforce**, but accounts for about **30% of the workplace fatalities**

Other industries, such as mining, have achieved significant reductions in workplace incidents, but these industries have very different workplace structures to farms and operate under more controlled environments.

Victorian Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions (DJPR) and WorkSafe Victoria have therefore made safety in agriculture a priority. Influencing the culture of safety on farms is complex given that farms can be homes, places of recreation and workplaces. A better understanding of the contextual factors influencing safety culture in agriculture is needed.

ISCRR partnered with Deakin University's National Centre for Farmer Health to look at research on influencing safety culture, as well as an analysis of programs and initiatives relevant to safety culture change in agriculture. Understanding the barriers and opportunities for culture change was a focus.

This research will provide a sound base of evidence for informing Victorian Government priorities and approaches for influencing future farm safety. Most importantly it will assist in reducing injuries and deaths on farms. The Department intends to undertake a separate project on the measurement of farm safety culture.

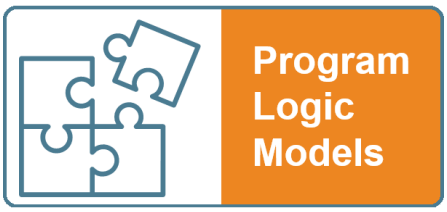
Research impact

Conference presentations

ISCRR's Research Communications and Translation Manager, Dr Jimmy Twin, will be presenting on the "Barriers to Return to Work after Injury – a 10 Year Review of ISCRR Research" at the Personal Injury Education Foundation (PIEF) conference from 12-14 July in Brisbane.

ISCRR looks forward to sharing our deep knowledge on injured workers with the broader community.

Workshops by ISCRR



ISCRR's Senior Research Officer (Evaluation) Dr Sarah Oxford and Research Lead Dr Janine McMillan, recently delivered a two-part workshop on Program Logic to WorkSafe Victoria staff.

ISCRR facilitates program logic workshops to help teams explicitly define the problem needing to be addressed, explore a theory of change to resolve the issue and build consensus among the group.

A program logic helps communicate complex programs and is helpful for program evaluation.

ISCRR has already received unsolicited positive feedback from attendees. We will be delivering more of these workshops in the next financial year.

1. https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-10-21/farm-accidents-in-riverina-spark-worksafe-harvest-warning/12797060

Having a fruit bowl on a table at home is a known way to 'nudge' your family into making better snacking choices than looking in the pantry. Behavioural insights is a field that utilises research into how to influence people's choices in decision-making in non-coercive ways and can be employed to help workers make safer choices in the workplace.

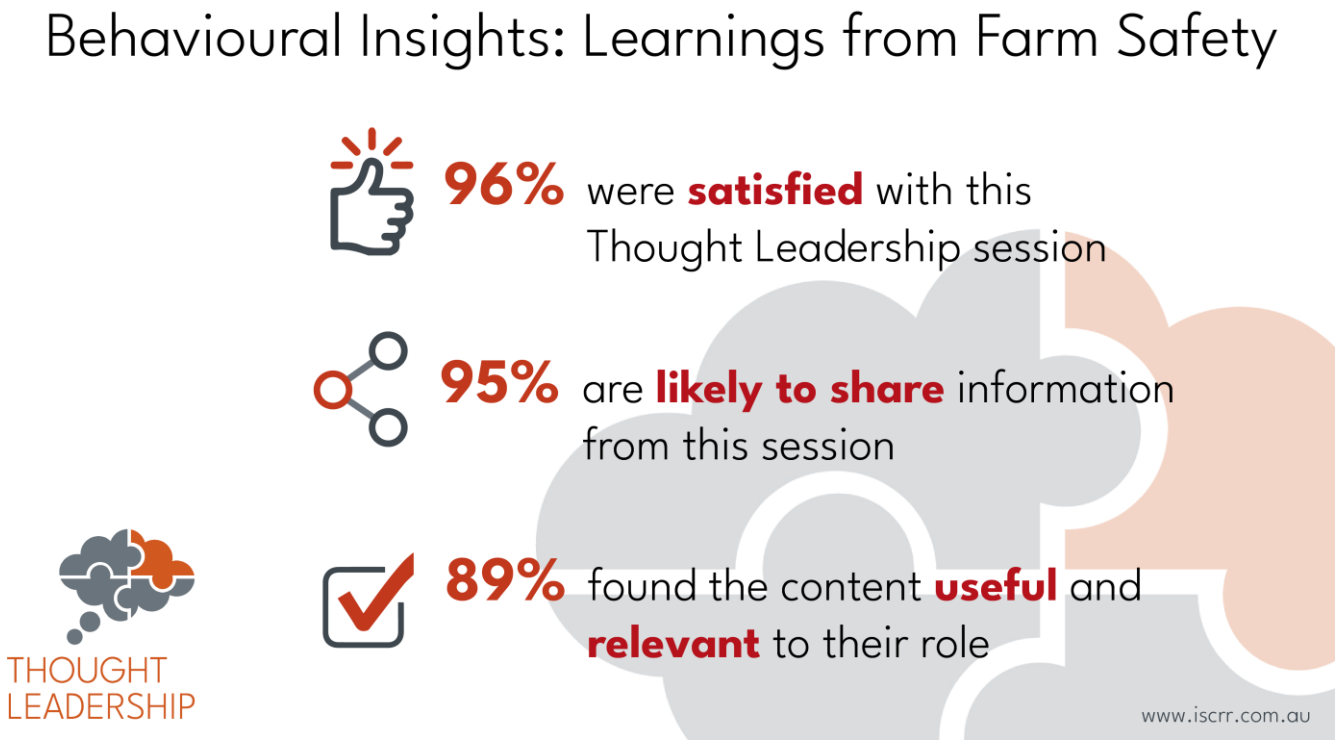
On June 22 ISCRR and WorkSafe Victoria's Research Division presented the inaugural Thought-leadership session as a webinar on how behavioural insights from farm safety could be applied to other businesses. It was a highly successful event with two prominent thought-leaders leading the discussion:

- Graham Phelps, Manager of Programs – Agriculture, Health & Safety at WorkSafe Victoria, gave an overview of WorkSafe's three-year Agriculture strategy, and presented research from the Agriculture Behavioural Insights project.
- Madeline Moore, Senior Behavioural Strategy Consultant with The Behavioural Architects, discussed how behavioural insights can be applied in other programs and business areas.

Jacquie Cotton, from the National Centre for Farmer Health, and Sam Paul, from The Behavioural Architects, helped to field questions during the Q&A panel discussion, moderated by ISCRR's Research Communications and Translation Manager, Dr Jimmy Twin.

It was an extremely successful event as evidenced by the feedback from the audience poll (see infographic below).

This session served as a jumping-off point for further discussion on the topic of behavioural insights, and aims to inform strategic thought and direction throughout WorkSafe Victoria. Stay tuned for updates on the next Thought-leadership session.



Above: Data collected via zoom audience poll during the Thought-leadership webinar: Behavioural Insights from Farm Safety.

Staff showcase

Meet Kim Pham

ISCRR is immensely proud of its passionate and talented staff that we endeavour to share their achievements in this section of our newsletter. This month we are showcasing Kim Pham.

Kim leads the management of ISCRR institute operations, project administration of internal ISCRR research projects, and end-to-end project management of externally funded ISCRR research projects. Kim is passionate about continuous process improvement to provide a high-quality research program for WorkSafe and the broader collaborative network.

In her 15 years' experience in the biomedical research management and 10 years collective experience in the not-for-profit and commercial sectors, Kim has a diverse background in research program management and operations, educational program design and implementation, policy research and proposal development of high impact initiatives for large organisations.

Kim holds a Bachelor of Biomedical Science (Honours) from The University of Melbourne, a PhD in cellular immunology from Swinburne University of Technology and a postgraduate Certificate in Business Development from the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research.

In Kim's spare time, she likes bushwalking and making kimchi.

Events

Date	Event	Location
12-14 July 2021	2021 Personal Injury & Disability Management National Conference	Brisbane, Australia
19-22 September 2021	XXII World Congress on Safety and Health at Work 2021	Toronto, Canada
29-30 September 2021	Safety in Action Show & Conference	Sydney, Australia
17-19 October 2021	Injury and Disability schemes seminar: Resilience and Recovery (Actuaries Institute)	Canberra, Australia
25-28 October 2021	International Symposium on Epidemiology in Occupational Health, EPICOH 2020	Montreal, Canada
3-5 November 2021	ARMS 2021 Virtual Conference	Virtual
6-10 February 2022	International Congress on Occupational Health (ICOH 2022)	Virtual
27-30 November 2022	14th World Conference on Injury Prevention and Safety Promotion 2020 (Safety 2022)	Adelaide, Australia

ISCRR Institute for Safety, Compensation and Recovery Research
A joint initiative of WorkSafe Victoria and Monash University

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