

Research Connect Forum 2026

Safe work in a changing climate

Thursday 5 November 2026

**State Library of Queensland
Edge Auditorium
10am – 3pm AEST (Brisbane time)**



Event schedule



Registrations from 9.30am AEST (Brisbane Time)

10:00-10:20 am AEST

Welcome

Janet Schorer PSM FIPAA (MC), SafeWork Commissioner and Safe Work Australia NSW Member

Welcome to Country

Opening remarks and scene setting

Marie Boland, Chief Executive Officer of Safe Work Australia

10:20-11:00 am AEST

Keynote

Climate Change and Work Health and Safety: Current Evidence and Further Directions

Professor Peng Bi FASSA FAIHS, Professor, School of Public Health, Adelaide University

Professor Bi's presentation will summarise and quantify climate change's impacts on workers health and safety, including infectious diseases, and identify the most vulnerable industries, occupations and workers. This keynote will examine current WHS policy and guidelines, frontline workers', managers' and WHS representatives' perceptions and knowledge, as well as research and knowledge gaps. The findings will inform recommendations for national WHS regulators and industry leaders to manage climate-related risks and strengthen the resilience of high-risk industries and vulnerable workers in Australia.

11:05 am -12:00 pm AEST

Panel: From climate risk to workplace action

Panellists will work through an evolving workplace scenario, testing how employers, workers and regulators can make decisions when evidence, responsibilities, and consequences are still emerging and as climate risks intensify.

Janet Schorer SafeWork Commissioner and Safe Work Australia NSW Member

Tim Lawler Chamber of Minerals and Energy of Western Australia

Nate Tosh Queensland Council of Unions and Safe Work Australia Strategic Issues Group - Workers' Compensation Member

Professor Deborah Glass Monash University



Event schedule



Lunch 12:00-1:00 pm AEST

1:00-2:45 pm AEST

Workshop: Starting the climate conversation

This facilitated workshop will use strategic foresight activities and small-group discussions to explore how climate change may shape future work health and safety challenges and responses. Participants will contribute to discussions on two of the four topics, exploring future scenarios, practical responses, policy opportunities and evidence gaps.

The four topics are:

- Workplace air pollution and indoor air quality
- Extreme heat and heat stress
- Vector-borne diseases
- Psychosocial risks and climate hazards



Facilitated by
Associate Professor
of Design and Health,
Adelaide University

Associate Professor Aaron Davis is a design researcher and facilitator specialising in co-design, community engagement, strategic design and complex collaboration. He develops participant-centred approaches to co-design planning and evaluation and examines how design strategies can strengthen collaborative research. His work helps diverse groups address complex challenges and translate participant insights into practical outcomes.

2:50-3:00 pm AEST

Closing remarks and next steps

Marie Boland, Chief Executive Officer of Safe Work Australia



Speaker biographies



Janet Schorer (MC)

Safe Work Australia NSW Member & SafeWork Commissioner

Janet became NSW's SafeWork Commissioner in July 2025, marking SafeWork NSW's establishment as an independent WHS regulator. She brings more than 20 years of public sector executive leadership experience.

A former registered nurse and NSW Children's Guardian, Janet held senior roles at TAFE NSW, the Department of Premier and Cabinet, and the Department of Family and Community Services.

She received the Public Service Medal, particularly for protecting children, and is a National Fellow of IPAA and IPAA NSW Vice President.



Marie Boland

Chief Executive Officer, Safe Work Australia

Marie's WHS experience spans many roles, including completing the 2018 National Review of the model WHS laws (Boland Review). Marie is a Member of Safe Work Australia and its subsidiary committees and a Commissioner of the Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission. Marie was the 2021 Inaugural Thinker in Residence at the University of South Australia's Psychosocial Safety Climate Global Observatory.



Professor Peng Bi

Professor of Public Health, Adelaide University

Peng Bi is Professor of Public Health and Environmental Medicine at Adelaide University. He leads the Environmental Change and Health Outcomes team, with more than 20 years of climate change and health adaptation research and directs Natural Hazard Research Australia's Building Resilience to Impacts of Heatwaves in Australia Consortium. His research informs public health policy and industry and community resilience. His team developed South Australia's heat and health warning system in 2010, later adopted nationally by Emergency Management Australia.



Speaker biographies



Tim Lawler

Manager Health, Safety and People, Chamber of Minerals and Energy of Western Australia

Tim Lawler leads health and safety policy at the Chamber of Minerals and Energy of Western Australia (CMEWA). His resources career began on drilling rigs, onshore and offshore, before he stepped away to complete a psychology degree and moved into emergency response training and WHS consulting leadership. Deputy chair of the CMEWA Mines Emergency Response Committee, he focuses on how expertise develops, how leaders shape risk, and how people make decisions under uncertainty.



Nate Tosh

Queensland Council of Unions and Safe Work Australia Strategic Issues Group-Workers' Compensation Member

Nate Tosh is a Legislation and Policy Officer at the Queensland Council of Unions. Prior to the QCU, he worked for the United Firefighters Union Queensland and United Voice, as well as short stints with WorkCover Queensland and in the occupational rehabilitation industry. Nate holds a Graduate Diploma in Occupational Health and Safety and a Master of Rehabilitation Counselling.



Professor Deborah Glass PhD,

Monash Centre for Occupational and Environmental Health, Monash University

Professor Deborah Glass is an occupational hygienist who has worked in industry and academia. She studied firefighters, workers in the petroleum, coal mine and artificial stone industries. She has over 250 publications including five IARC monographs.

She is on the Cancer Council Occupational subcommittee, ACGIH TLV committee for 20 years, and AIOH Public Policy Committee.

