

News Release

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Refurbished farm machinery poses greater safety risk

Refurbished and reconditioned farm machinery poses a greater safety risk to users a South Australian Parliamentary Committee has heard.

The Economics and Finance Committee is undertaking an inquiry into warranty and safety issues surrounding farm machinery. The committee has received over 35 written submissions expressing concern about warranty and safety issues.

At its hearing this week members were told that refurbished and reconditioned machinery quite commonly do not comply in many cases with the safety standards that are in place in Australia.

The Committee was taking evidence from Safework SA.

Safework SA representatives told the committee while reconditioned and refurbished machinery was generally much cheaper, the work was usually undertaken overseas, and in many cases did not meet Australian safety standards.

Safework SA said that imported new equipment met safety standards in about 95% of cases while second hand equipment purchased at clearing sales and the like fared the worst when it came to safety standards.

In response to a question asked by committee member and initiator of the inquiry SA Labor MP Mr Tony Piccolo Safework SA told the committee machinery documentation was not routinely audited to ensure it provided correct and reliable information regarding the safe use of machinery.

Mr Piccolo asked Safework SA whether they had heard of instances where headers caught on fire during harvesting because of poor design.

The committee was advised “there is certainly an issue with fires in grain harvesters.”

The Committee was told that there are a lot of drives, belts and things like that and often, if the guards are too close, the chaff builds up around those moving parts, heats up and then you have a fire.

Mr Piccolo said the committee was told “that is why you will often find that farmers will actually take off those guards, because they want to reduce the risk of fire”

“ ... but then they have introduced another hazard, because they have taken off the physical guard that protects them getting onto the dangerous part.” the Committee heard.

The committee’s inquiry is continuing with further hearings scheduled to be held on Wednesday December 3rd.