

# MEDIA RELEASE

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## Rural SA business in midst of global expansion despite rocky start

Balco Australia is a local success story enjoying global success in hay processing through an innovative approach to work health and safety.

A rural based company, Balco Australia formed in 1991, growing year on year, developing their safety systems along the way.

“In 2012, our Board set the challenge for management to become compliant with the new work health and safety laws that were being rolled out. As a company we embraced the change and worked towards achieving that result – enlisting the help of Ai Group and SafeWork SA along the way” said Balco Australia CEO, Rob Lawson.

Balco Australia, located near Balaklava, is one of the nation’s leading hay processors, exporting to Japan, Taiwan, Korea and China. As well as employing more than 40 local staff, Balco Australia relies on a large network of growers in the SA region.

The Compliance Manager at Balco Australia, Collin Heslop, is also an influential member of the Industry Leaders Group for the York and Mid North, and well respected Balaklava local.

“It might feel unnatural to engage the regulator to come to your workplace, and you might be thinking this is going to cost me an arm and a leg,” Collin said.

“But trust me, it is smart to invite them in and the costs you incur now will result in increased productivity – without costing one of your workers an arm or a leg.”

“I’m proud to say that at Balco, we put people first, arming them with the necessary knowledge and skills to carry out their duties safely and know how to identify and respond to hazards,” said Mr Lawson.

Today, worker injuries are minimal and Balco Australia continues to work with SafeWork SA to get the best outcome for their workers. This approach has been a driver in an Australia-wide annual output of 170,000 tonnes to meet the increasing demand from overseas customers.

SafeWork SA and Ai Group recently hosted an event in Balaklava for Balco Australia to share their unique story, and look forward to continuing to showcase best practice walk’n’talks across South Australia.

“No system is perfect, and no business or individual has got it all right – which is why sharing insight at an event like this is so beneficial,” Collin said.



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For further information on accessing the SafeWork SA mobile work health and safety advisory service, please contact 1300 365 255 or visit [safework.sa.gov.au/freeadvice](https://safework.sa.gov.au/freeadvice).

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