Mount Isa Statement on Quad Bike Safety – 2012 – Media Release 3-8-2012

Over three days in August 2012, farm health and safety experts from Australia, New Zealand and United States of America gathered in Mount Isa, Queensland for the ‘Are you remotely interested?...’ and ‘Farmsafe’ Conference. During these three days the latest information was presented on the challenges of reducing quad bike related deaths and injury. The following statement provides a road map for future action to ensure the safety of those who work in agriculture.

Currently:
There is an estimated 220,000 quad bikes in Australia with 80% being used in rural industries. Quad bikes are the leading cause of death in Australian agriculture and a significant contributor to injuries, with half of these related to the bike rolling over.¹

This situation is preventable.

Without immediate action we will continue to see the number of deaths and injuries related to quad bikes increase. As more quad bikes are sold in Australia, this will add to the both the personal and economic burden.

Quad bikes are often not the most appropriate or safest vehicle for the tasks they are being used for. Consequently, farmers should look at all of the options available to them (e.g. tractor, ute, motorbike, side by side vehicle, horse).

Quad bikes are prone to rollover due to a lack of stability. This results in death from crush injuries and asphyxiation.²

Crush protection devices (CPDs) provide increased protection to the rider when the bike rolls.³

There is one crush protection device in Australia which has been developed and tested for use on quad bikes.

The science underpinning the manufacturers’ decision to oppose crush protection devices (CPDs) has been demonstrated to be invalid.⁴

Fitting a crush protection device could potentially reduce the number of quad bike deaths by up to 40%.⁵

Evidence from the USA is clear that for the last 20 years manufacturers have had information about the risks posed (i.e. deaths information through the US Consumer Product Safety Commission) and have not made significant changes to quad bikes to improve stability.⁵

Quad bikes are not safe for children. The carrying of passengers significantly increases the risk of injury.¹

Manufacturers’ recommend that people under the age of 16 years should not ride them and that passengers should not be carried.

Crush protection devices (CPDs) are the most important safety initiative and the one that can have the most immediate impact to reduce death and injury from rollovers.
Helmets and education form part of a comprehensive prevention package to reduce the impact of injury.

Currently, the cost of a quad bike does not include safety equipment which should be used when riding (e.g. helmets).

The relationship between vehicle travel speed and severity of injury and fatality has been well established. This also applies to the use of quad bikes.

Australia has had outstanding success in reducing tractor rollover deaths by 70%. This was achieved through an engineering approach placing rollover frames on tractors.

**We recommend that:**

- Crush protection devices (CPDs) be mandated for all quad bikes.
- An Australian Design Rule be developed for quad bikes.
- A technical standard for crush protection device be developed.
- New sales of child size quad bikes be stopped.
- Children under the age of 16 should not be allowed to ride quad bikes of any size and quad bikes should be designed so that this is not possible.
- Passengers should not be carried on quad bikes under any circumstance and that quad bikes should be designed so that this is not possible.
- The purchase cost of quad bikes must include appropriate safety equipment.
- The development of information on the selection of appropriate vehicles be undertaken and made available to farmers, pastoralists and rural industries.
- The development of information about the safety features and stability rating of quad bikes be made available to farmers, pastoralists and rural industries.

**What needs to happen:**

- All existing quad bikes should be fitted with an approved crush protection device (CPD)
- All new quad bikes be fitted with an approved crush protection device by the manufacturer or at point of sale.
- Fast track the development of a technical standard for crush protection devices (CPDs).
- Regulation of crush protection devices (CPDs) be accompanied by a rebate program funded by the manufacturers.
- When purchasing a quad bike, the cost of safety equipment should be included as part of the package.
- A campaign targeting parents to increase their understanding of the risks associated with quad bike use is required.

**Who are the contributors.**

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