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Director, Quad Bikes Taskforce
Consumer Product Safety Branch
Australian Competition and Consumer Commission
GPO Box 3131
Canberra ACT 2601
Email: qbtaskforce@accc.gov.au

Dear Mr Phillips,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input on the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission's review of quad bike safety.

The Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (RACS) has a strong history with regard to trauma prevention, and was represented in a trans-Tasman Quad Bike Performance Project Reference Group established by the heads of Workplace Safety Authorities, along with work health and safety regulators from Australia and New Zealand, manufacturers, unions, automotive and farming associations.

Following hundreds of tests on quads and side by side vehicles, the group identified safety improvements for quad bikes and farm industries to reduce fatalities and injuries, and a broad strategy to address a range of issues impacting quad bike safety. A star safety rating for stability, handling and rollover crashworthiness was also developed. The research was led by the UNSW Transport and Road Safety (TARS) research faculty.

The Australian Work Health and Safety Strategy 2012-2022 states that the most effective and durable means of creating a healthy and safe working environment is to eliminate hazards and risks during the design of new systems. This is the point at which the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) can be most effective at reducing death and serious injury from quad bikes and side by side vehicles, particularly among children who represent around a third of fatalities.

RACS recommends that the ACCC implement the TARS Australasian Terrain Vehicle Assessment Program for quad bikes and side by side vehicles or a system identical in essence to the New Car Assessment Program as a matter of priority. The results from the TARS research indicate that this would lead to significant improvements in safety through safer vehicle choice, safer vehicles being developed and marketed, and increased safety awareness among users.

The effects of quad bike injuries and fatalities devastate the lives of the victims, families and surrounding farming communities, and there is also an economic cost to pay. A University of Sydney study found that the average cost to the Australian economy of each quad bike-related fatality is \$AUD2.3 million.¹ This includes the cost of lost earnings, emergency services, accident investigations and other factors.

Around 70% of all deaths in the study involved a rollover, meaning design approaches to improve the safety of quad bikes in terms of stability and protection in the event of a rollover should be prioritised. RACS also recommends banning the importation of "child-sized" models from Australia until it can be clearly demonstrated that these products are safe for children, and mandating child-resistant start mechanisms on adult-sized quad bikes.

RACS has provided multiple submissions and witnesses who have appeared at coronial inquests and other inquiries into quad bike safety, and we stand ready to do so again as part of the ACCC's investigation.

You can view previous submissions and our position paper on the College website:

[Inquest into the death of 7 riders of quad bikes in Tasmania](#)
[NSW Crown Solicitor's joint inquests into deaths involving the use of quad bikes and related vehicles](#)
[RACS Position Paper – Trauma Prevention](#)

Yours sincerely,



Mr John Crozier, AM, CSM
Trauma Chair
Royal Australasian College of Surgeons

cc: Mr John Batten, President, RACS
Mr Richard Perry, Chair, Professional Standards & Development Board, RACS
Mrs Mary Harney, CEO, RACS
Mr John Biviano, Director Fellowship & Standards, RACS
Mrs Deborah Jenkins, Director, Relationships & Advocacy, RACS

¹ Lower, T, Pollock, K, Herde, E. Australian quad bike fatalities: what is the economic cost? ANZJPH 2013;
<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/1753-6405.12036/abstract>