



ROYAL AUSTRALASIAN COLLEGE OF SURGEONS

MEDIA RELEASE

Surgeons call for tighter regulation of quad bikes

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The Royal Australasian College of Surgeons has called for the tighter regulation of quad bikes, citing the seriousness and frequency of injuries sustained by riders.

Chair of the College's Trauma Committee, Associate Professor Daryl Wall, cited Australian mortality data that indicates 11 children were killed riding quad bikes between 1989 and 1992, with 66 fatalities over all age ranges. Seventeen children died between 2000 and 2005.

Australian hospital data suggests they are responsible for 8 to 11 per cent of all on-farm injuries, and rollover of the vehicle was associated with the largest number of fatalities (39 per cent). Head injuries occurred in 24 per cent of cases. The instability of quad bikes is borne out by the finding that 69 per cent of accidents occurred on a steep slope.

"Given the overwhelming evidence of quad bikes' inherent danger, governments must move swiftly to tighten regulation around their use," Professor Wall said.

"The public must be made aware of their instability and the dangers they pose to children. Information on their safe use should be available and promoted at point of sale, and there should be a requirement for the training of workers who operate quad bikes to ensure competence and knowledge of safety measures.

"There should be a restriction on their use by those under 16 years of age and the speed of all quad bikes should be limited to 55 kilometres per hour. They should be limited to use off public roads and should only be used in situations where the risk of collision with another vehicle has been removed," he said.

Professor Wall also called for the removal from sale of 3-wheel bikes or 'trikes'.

He also called for the encouragement of research into the design and development of quad bikes which allow for rollover protection, and the design and development of an appropriate helmet for quad bike use. He said that until such a helmet has been developed, the use of a particular helmet designed for horse riding and horse related activities is suggested (AS NZS 3838 – 2006).

"It is time for governments to take action which curbs the appalling rate of preventable death and injury that is occurring on farms in Australia and New Zealand. Recent calls from workplace safety groups, endorsing many of the reforms suggested above, should be heeded and implemented immediately," Professor Wall said.

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