



SafeWork NSW



# NSW QUAD BIKE SAFETY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

SNAPSHOT 2016–17

# QUAD BIKES ARE CONSIDERED TO BE AN IMPORTANT AND POPULAR PIECE OF EQUIPMENT FOR FARMERS. DESPITE THIS, THEY CAN ALSO POSE ONE OF THE GREATEST THREATS IN RURAL WORKPLACES.

In 2012, SafeWork NSW (formerly WorkCover NSW) commissioned the University of NSW Transport and Road Safety (UNSW TARS) to undertake the Quad Bike Performance Project. The 18-month comprehensive testing and research project was conducted on 16 production vehicles - eight agricultural and three recreational quad bikes, five side by side vehicles (SSVs) and one prototype quad bike. These were conducted with and without loads and operator protective devices (OPDs).

As part of this project, UNSW TARS examined and analysed a number of coronial case files collected from all Australian states and territories for the period 2000 to 2012, and workplace injury and hospital admissions data from NSW and elsewhere.

In 2015, both the NSW and Queensland Coroners conducted coronial inquests into deaths involving quad bikes and SSVs including examination of the UNSW TARS research reports. The inquests considered issues like vehicle design, the introduction of a consumer safety rating system, Australian Standards, training, licensing, helmets, OPDs, community awareness, seat belts, personal locator beacons, children and police investigations.

The inquests and the UNSW TARS Quad Bike Crash Performance Projects' key recommendations included:

- developing, implementing and supporting a consumer safety rating system for quad bikes and SSVs
- encouraging the uptake of quad bike training
- considering the adoption and promotion of suitable helmets for quad bike use
- instigating an independent study into the benefits, risks and efficacy of OPDs
- developing a public awareness campaign around safe use of quad bikes in rural workplaces, and
- improving data collection.

The NSW farming community is currently at a tipping point. There is an underlying desire to be safer but there is little knowledge in the farming community as to the potential solutions that can be adopted that suit the rural work environment.\*

To address the issue of quad bike safety across NSW, SafeWork NSW, in consultation with key NSW Government agencies and other stakeholders, has developed the NSW Quad Bike Safety Improvement Program (the Program). This Program utilises current academic and market research to deliver national initiatives, world first research and strategic policy development. The Program will deliver direct support to NSW farmers.

Through the development and roll out of this Program, the NSW Government aims to decrease the unacceptably high rates of fatality and injury associated with quad bike use with the aim of bringing to an end the financial and social costs of fatalities in our rural communities.

## NSW QUAD BIKE SAFETY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM AIMS:

- ✓ Farmers engage in safe work practices that reduce the risks associated with quad bikes.
- ✓ Safer work practices regarding quad bikes are the norm in rural workplaces.
- ✓ Data collection methods for incidents involving quad bikes are improved.
- ✓ The research community, co-regulators, manufacturers and the NSW farming community have a deeper understanding of factors that lead to quad bike incidents.
- ✓ Farmers have increased knowledge about safe plant and safe work practices.

\* Based on market research conducted by Instinct and Reason on behalf of SafeWork NSW, 2016.

# QUAD BIKE RISK PROFILE

Quad bikes are considered to be a vital piece of farm equipment in Australia. They are used for mustering, property inspections, weed control and maintenance work. They can be conditionally registered for limited access to public roads (eg when needing to cross a public road to access adjacent properties). Quad bikes are also the leading cause of fatalities on Australian farms.

- Since 2001, there have been over 220 deaths as a result of quad bike use and up to 20 per cent of these fatalities included children under the age of 16.<sup>1</sup>
- 68 per cent of the quad bike fatalities occurred on farms. 30 per cent of these fatalities occurred in NSW.<sup>2</sup>
- The cause of death is distributed between rollovers, where asphyxiation and crush injury are common and non-rollovers, where the operator makes contact with a hard surface following a quad bike accident.
- In none of the accidents examined by the NSW Coroner was a quad bike operator wearing a helmet.

- There are approximately 1,400 presentations each year at hospitals in Australia for quad bike injuries, ranging from minor to severe.<sup>3</sup>
- On average, NSW farmers own two to three quad bikes each with the number owned ranging from one to eight.
- As many as 70 to 80 per cent of farmers who participated in market research focus groups reported having accidents on their quad bikes.

## SUPPORT ACTION

Collaboration with key stakeholders is considered vital to the success of the Program. Commitment to the actions and goals of the Program allows for co-delivery of key safety messages, which will strengthen the reach and impact of the Program's deliverables.

1 Australian Centre for Agricultural Health and Safety

2 Australian Centre for Agricultural Health and Safety

3 Grzebieta, P.R. et al. (2015) *Final project Summary Report: Quad bike performance project test results, conclusions and recommendations*; University of New South Wales Transport and Road Safety, Sydney, Australia



THERE IS AN UNDERLYING DESIRE TO BE SAFER BUT THERE IS LITTLE KNOWLEDGE IN THE FARMING COMMUNITY AS TO THE POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS THAT CAN BE ADOPTED THAT SUIT THE RURAL WORK ENVIRONMENT.\*

## NSW GOVERNMENT KEY ACTIONS TO DATE

Pre 2015	2015	2016	
<p>In 2012, the NSW Government committed \$1.3 million to UNSW TARS to undertake world-first research into quad bike safety.</p> <p>This research was guided by an industry reference group consisting of Australian and international experts.</p> <p>In 2014, the Alive and Well farm safety campaign launched.</p>	<p>UNSW TARS Quad Bike Crash Performance reports released.</p> <p>UNSW TARS testing video released.</p> <p>The NSW Deputy State Coroner made a number of recommendations regarding quad bike safety in rural workplaces.</p>	<p>SafeWork NSW engaged an epidemiologist to undertake an independent, scientific study into the efficacy of OPDs.</p> <p>SafeWork NSW commissioned an independent contractor to conduct market research into the interest levels of the NSW farming community in the NSW Quad Bike Safety Improvement Program.</p>	<p>SafeWork NSW consulted with key stakeholders from NSW and Federal Government agencies, social partners, industry, manufacturers, community stakeholders and the farming community on the proposed NSW Government response to the issue of quad bike safety.</p>



\* Based on market research conducted by Instinct and Reason on behalf of SafeWork NSW, 2016.

# NSW QUAD BIKE SAFETY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM: KEY FOCUS AREAS

The Program is a key component of the NSW Government response to the issue of quad bike safety. It is designed to offer direct support to NSW farmers to undertake harm prevention activities associated with the use of quad bikes in rural

workplaces. This will be achieved through a broad range of initiatives delivered in partnership with key stakeholders.

FOCUS AREA	ACTION	TIMEFRAME	OUTCOME
Safe Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work collaboratively with social partners and key stakeholders to support cultural change through the development and implementation of a comprehensive public awareness campaign.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>June 2016 – June 2017.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Farmers have increased knowledge about safe plant and safe work practices.</li> <li>Key social partners take leadership in providing key safety messaging around quad bike safety to the farming community.</li> </ul>
Safer vehicles in workplaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Offer a small business safety rebate* to farmers who upgrade to an SSV.</li> <li>Work with state and federal agencies to develop and implement a voluntary consumer safety rating system for quad bikes and SSVs to reduce serious injuries and deaths in the workplace.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rebate commencing July 2016 until funds expended.</li> <li>Secure national support July – December 2016.</li> <li>Development phase – March 2017.</li> <li>Testing phase – June 2017.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Higher uptake of safer design vehicles.</li> <li>Reduced rollover injury rates.</li> <li>Customers make informed decisions about quad bike and SSV purchases.</li> </ul>
Operator Protective Devices (OPDs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Subject to outcomes of the independent, scientific study into the efficacy of OPDs, offer a small business safety rebate* to farmers who choose to purchase manufactured OPDs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rebate commencing July 2016 until funds expended.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Farmers retrofit quad bikes for safer design.</li> <li>Reduced roll over and asphyxiation injury rates.</li> <li>Farmers engage in safe work practices that reduce the risks associated with quad bike use.</li> </ul>
Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote the Unit of Competency (UOC) developed for quad bikes (AHC/MOM212A) in conjunction with task specific on-the-job training.</li> <li>Work with training providers and the farming community to provide up to 100 training events to be held in remote and regional areas across NSW.</li> <li>Offer a small business safety rebate* to attend UOC AHC/MOM212A – Operate Quad Bikes through a registered training organisation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rebate commencing July 2016 until funds expended.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased skill level of quad bike operators in NSW.</li> <li>Farmers engage in safe work practices that reduce the risks associated with quad bike use.</li> </ul>
Helmets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support the agricultural sector in delivering safety messages relating to helmets.</li> <li>Engage with co-regulators to address point of sale information.</li> <li>Offer a small business safety rebate* for the purchase of a suitable helmet for on-farm use that is lightweight, well-ventilated and also offers sun protection.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>July 2016.</li> <li>Point of sale verification activities June 2016 – June 2017.</li> <li>Rebate commencing July 2016 until funds expended.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased rates of quad bike operators wearing helmets.</li> <li>Farmers engage in safe work practices that reduce the risks associated with quad bike use.</li> <li>Reduced injuries associated with head trauma.</li> </ul>
Data Collection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with other government agencies to develop a first response officer checklist that captures essential information when specifically attending a quad bike incident.</li> <li>Improve first response training for SafeWork NSW inspectors and NSW police officers on the essential information to be captured when attending a quad bike incident.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>July 2016.</li> <li>July – December 2016.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The research community, co-regulators, manufacturers and the NSW farming community have a deeper understanding of factors that lead to quad bike incidents.</li> </ul>

\* These rebates will be a time and funds limited small business rebate.

For more information contact  
SafeWork NSW on 13 10 50 or  
visit [www.safework.nsw.gov.au](http://www.safework.nsw.gov.au)

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