Death toll keeps rising

Tsassie wine finds favour

Ban kids from quad bikes call

Statistics from Farmsafe show that nationally, 124 ATV deaths were recorded in the 10 years from 2000, or 12 a year.

Australan Centre for Agricultural Health and Safety director Tony Lower supports the move to get children off ATVs.

"If you look at the evidence from Australia, the US and Canada, children do not have the physical size, strength or cognitive development to operate these machines safely," he said.

Associate Professor Lower said two-wheeled motorbikes and even horses were much safer than quad bikes.

"We want children to be the next generation of farmers and to do that we have to keep them safe," he said.

An ATV manufacturer has broken ranks to offer rollover protection for sale with its vehicles.

CFMoto will now offer the Quadbar device through its dealerships across Australia, conceding crush protection for ATVs was "inevitable".

The company is the first to endorse the sales of rollover devices through retail outlets.

Tasmanian children under 16 could be banned from operating full-size all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) on the family farm, if the Tasmanian Government accepts a push coming from Canberra.

The call for an age ban follows a warning from a Tasmanian coroner that tougher licensing for riders should be introduced.

Eleven Tasmanians were killed in quad bike accidents in the 10 years to 2010. There have been more deaths in the past six months.

The latest accident, last Saturday near Arthur River in the far North-West, involved a 19-year-old woman who suffered head injuries.

It was the fourth serious accident involving quad bikes in as many months in the North-West.

Federal Workplace Relations Minister Bill Shorten is behind the push to make it illegal for under-16s to use full-size ATVs in workplaces. Mr Shorten wants farms included in the workplace too.

Mr Shorten said 20 per cent of ATV deaths involved children under 16.

"I am looking to work with state and territory regulators to institute a ban on children under 16 operating a quad bike of full size in a workplace," he said.

Tasmanian coroner Rod Chandler has held four inquests involving ATVs in six months.

Releasing findings into the death of a quad bike rider on the West Coast, Mr Chandler called for a new licensing system for ATV users and extra safety training to be mandatory.

Coroner Chandler said circumstances surrounding each of the deaths showed a lack of understanding of the dangers involved in using the vehicles.

The Tasmanian Government has not yet been approached by Safe Work Australia on the issue. But a spokesman said local authorities were aware it was being discussed at a federal level.

"We have a strong working relationship with the Federal Government, and will await any approach," the spokesman said.

The Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association says quad bikes were important farm tools but it also had concerns some riders did not understand the vehicle’s limits.

It said the classification of quad bikes as farm vehicles meant accidents and deaths involving them were sometimes classed as farm accidents even when there was little link with farming.

The Victorian Government has already signalled it is unlikely to ban children from riding ATVs on farms.

That government said it was looking to improve quad bike safety but rejected Federal Government attempts to ban under-16s from using full-size ATVs, saying there was a distinction to be made between using ATVs for recreation and for farm work.

Agricultural organisations, regulators, insurers and researchers have given emphatic support for engineering improvements for greater stability and rollover protection.

"Many people have been oblivious to the quad bike’s inherent instability and the lack of protection for the driver when it rolls," Mr Taylor said.

"If the quad bike is the only vehicle able to be used for a task, it is vital the rider wears an approved helmet at all times and has a crush protection device fitted to the bike."

ATVs and the national Farmsafe network recommend that children should never ride a quad bike of any size and there should never be any passengers on a quad bike.

For example, this trip we are taking students from Lincoln at the University of Nebraska’s Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources on a tour of Nebraska’s 28 wineries and 125 vineyards is not dissimilar to Tasmania’s wine industry.

"Both Tasmania and Nebraska have emerging wine industries, and we come here to learn something," he said.

"I worked in several vineyards," he said. "Tasmania is a fantastic place to come to, it has a wide variety of agricultural pursuits."

"The diversity here is incredible and you have access that is impossible elsewhere."

"For example, this trip we are visiting vineyards, seeing poppies, then hop on the bus to do that in the USA we would have to go to different states and travel for days to get the same experience. Here you can do that in a morning. It is a great place."

Dr Read, who likes to cook, said "Tasmania has some of the best seafood. You are very lucky to live here."

Frogmore Creek Wines vineyard manager Danny Belbin said he relished having the American students visit.

"It is fantastic, we would like to see more of the student visits," Mr Belbin said. "Maybe some of the students might come back to work here."

"Our involvement with UTAS has been great. Viticulture is not attracting suitably qualified people to the workforce. There is a real gap emerging in the education area."

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