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Quad Bike Safety Taskforce  
Issues Paper submission

Consumer, Building and Occupational Services  
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To Whom it may concern,

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss issues relating to Quad bike safety in Tasmania. Quad bike tours have been operating successfully in Coles Bay, Freycinet National Park since 1998. I have been working for the company since 2005 and took over the company 7 years ago. From reading through the issues paper I noticed a large distinction between quad bikes utilised for private use and farms as opposed to organised group tours. As far as I am aware, no deaths have occurred during an organised short tour in Australia, certainly not in Tasmania.

I am supportive of a plan that will increase safety to all quad bike users.

**1. Raise public awareness of risks and highlight safe use practices**

Of the 10 points put forward our company complies strictly with all the safety measures. The only point not implemented although it has been *considered* is fitment of rollover protection. The jury is still out regarding the effectiveness in ALL rollover scenarios combined with the high cost of fitting the devices over a large fleet of quad bikes.

The best ways to communicate about risks and safe use practices is for Riders to participate in a form of practical training.

In our experience, the most prevalent risk factors associated with Quad bikes are:

- a. Riders inattention
- b. A reflex we refer to as 'throttle freeze'. When a Rider needs to apply brakes quickly and unexpectedly, adrenaline causes both hands to lock up and they unintentionally also squeeze the thumb throttle on at full acceleration. This action overrides the locked brakes and causes the vehicle to continue to power forward instead of coming to a stop which can have potentially disastrous results.

## **2. Review available training in Tasmania**

We provide training to every participant on our tours. Our guides are also trained rigorously in-house to provide a consistent standard.

We do utilise 3<sup>rd</sup> party training for our staff. The training experience has differed greatly in quality. In recent years, we have struggled to access quality training. The last training provider we used came on site, took our staff for a ride and signed off on our staff's ability but did not provide ANY additional training which was our expectation after what they advertised and what we have experienced in the past. The 'stay upright' course was the best by far but they no longer offer it in Tasmania.

Training is about but not readily available. We have had to wait for months in some cases to book a training session.

I believe training should be mandated, at least for work places.

I think the uptake of training is low as it is a full day, costly and can be tedious.

A company such as ours would be able to provide an enjoyable training experience on our standard tour by demonstrating all the key messages in a fun, relaxed atmosphere and rewards the participant with a scenic ride over undulating tracks. I would like to put forward our services if this is a consideration.

## **3. Helmets**

In our business, participants are always required to wear helmets.

The NZ standard appears to offer a great alternative for lightweight, ventilated helmets and would surely be more likely to be worn for primary industries.

An Australian standard for quad bike helmets would be a great option. From what I could ascertain, some current models available in NZ were only rated to a top speed of 30kph.

Our company would still choose Motocross helmets as the chin/mouth guard provides additional protection. And the fact that participants only wear them for the duration of the tour, not every day makes the heavier, less ventilated helmets more bearable

## **4. Rollover Protection**

Rollover protection has not been installed on our quad bikes as some dealers have warned that warranty would be voided if they are fitted. I have not investigated whether this is verified.

Our tours utilise some of the smaller vehicles on the market due to their low power and low weight making any potential rollovers easy to lift upright, the other important factor being that Riders are not alone, so there would always be help within seconds.

Cost is a huge barrier in fitting the rollover devices when you have a fleet of vehicles.

## **5. National standard for quad bikes**

An Australian standard for quad bike design would be supported if a range of vehicles were made available to meet different markets.

An electronic shut off system to limit the effect of 'throttle freeze' would be an extremely worthwhile addition to quad bike safety. I have designed a simple system in theory, but have not experimented with a working model.

If interested, I would be happy to demonstrate the idea which could be retro fitted as an accessory.

## **6. Consumer safety rating system**

A safety rating system would affect our purchasing choices in the future.

Gross weight and power to weight ratio would be items we would consider for a safety rating system.

## **7. Rebate scheme**

A similar rebate to VIC and NSW may improve quad bike safety in Tasmania.

However, in the other states that already implement a rebate scheme it is only available for Primary producers, so this model would provide no incentive for other users to consider roll over protection or side by sides vehicles.

As a tour company that relies COMPLETELY on quad bikes as our product offering, any new legislation could have a large impact on how we operate. The document outlines the safety concerns of quad bikes used in a farming environment but appears to not have raised any specific concerns when these vehicles are used in a closely supervised tour environment. Our standards have been honed over many years and our risk management is very effective.

I do believe that there are unique risks associated with primary producer/recreation users compared to experience/tourism providers.

Kind Regards

Samuel Jaeschke

Managing Director  
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