MEDIA RELEASE

Surgeons want quad bikes banned for anyone under age 16

Tuesday 7 March, 2017

The Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (RACS) is urging the NSW Government to ban the use of quad bikes by children, following the latest death of a six year old girl in country NSW.

The young girl died after a crash on a quad bike being driven by another 13 year old girl, taking the quad bike toll across Australia to 115 in the last seven years.

RACS Trauma Committee Chair Dr John Crozier, said since 2001 there have been 231 quad bike fatalities of which 35 (15 per cent) were children aged 14 years and younger.

“Quad bikes and kids do not mix. We need effective controls to prevent these tragedies.

“These deaths can be prevented if restrictions are put in place that reflect the danger that these machines pose to young riders.

“In Massachussetts for example, a ban on children under 14 years riding quad bikes nearly halted deaths, and halved the number of brain injuries in children.”

Despite having four wheels, quad bikes have a high centre of gravity and a narrow wheelbase, making them unstable.

“Most injuries and deaths involve the bike rolling onto the rider and this can occur at low speeds,” Dr Crozier said.

“Quad bikes are not toys; they leave very little room for rider error - a lack of judgement, a lack of skill, or even a lack of body mass and physical strength, can result in death or serious injury.

“This places children at a distinct disadvantage when operating these vehicles, and this is something the NSW Coroner recognised when she recommended a ban on under 16s riding quads in 2015,” Dr Crozier said.

The Coroner also supported expert recommendations for an independent quad bike safety assessment program.

Statistics show that there is a strong correlation between the age and weight of a person injured in a quad bike accident and the severity of the injuries that they will sustain.

“Surgeons are often on the front lines of these horrific injuries and we see first-hand the damage caused by quad bikes,” Dr Crozier said.

“We must ensure that children are not exposed to death or serious injury by being given access to quad bikes.”

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