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# **Quad Bike Related Deaths and Injuries Australia 2010 Media Monitors Report**

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**Australian Centre for Agricultural Health and Safety**

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## Background

Australian print media provides an avenue to highlight the prevalence of farm related deaths and injuries. The process of media monitoring has been used by the National Farm Injury Data Centre (NFIDC) since 2005 to assist in the collection of information on farm injury events (fatal and non-fatal). This report focuses specifically on data involving quad bikes (both on and off farms).

## Method

Media Monitors Australia is a privately owned company contracted by the NFIDC to scan approximately 2,500 daily, weekly and monthly publications Australia wide. Publications are scanned for various search terms nominated by the NFIDC. In relation to the monitoring of quad bike related injury events, the following search terms are used: *“ATV re accidents, injuries or safety on farms or rural properties”*, *“Quad Bike”* and/or *“Quad bike in re to accidents, injuries or safety on farms or rural properties”*.

Each day's articles are received via email in PDF format, are viewed for relevance and then entered into a *Microsoft Excel* database. Any quad bike related death that has been reported in the media is added to the Quad Bike Related Deaths Register. The Access Liaison Officer at the National Coroners' Information System (NCIS) is notified of the fatal injury event and the NFIDC is then informed of the matching NCIS case number. This process allows for timely reporting of quad bike related fatality cases in Australia, as cases are added to the register regardless of their closure status i.e. open cases are included within the register. Once sufficient information is available from NCIS so that cause of death, mechanism of injury and intent can be accurately defined, these events can then be reported on more comprehensively.

## Results

### Deaths

There were approximately 2,304 print media articles received by the NFIDC from Media Monitors Australia in 2010. A total of nine quad bike related deaths were reported for this period. Table 1 provides a summary of the quad bike related fatal injury events:

- Of the nine reported deaths there was one case where location could not be determined from the available information. Four (50%) of these deaths occurred on farm.
- Of the nine reported quad bike fatalities, one case could not be classified as either a rollover or non-rollover incident. Of the remaining eight cases, four (50%) were rollovers.
- Rollovers accounted for 75% of on-farm and 33% of non-farm deaths.

**Table 1:** Quad bike related deaths in Australia as reported in Australian print media 2010

Age	Sex	State	Description of Event	Rollover Yes or No	Farm Yes or No
42	Male	NSW	A MAN was killed when his quad bike rolled on him in the Hunter Valley. Police and paramedics found the 42-year-old man dead at his Coney Creek Rd, Quorrobolong property.	Yes	Yes
20	Male	NT	A 20-year-old man was killed falling off his quad bike while riding with friends near Stow Road, Howard Springs. His mates frantically tried to save him by administering CPR. The man was taken to Royal Darwin Hospital by St John Ambulance but was declared dead on arrival.	Unknown	No
79	Male	VIC	A MAN is dead after the quad bike he was riding rolled onto its side on a farm near Lethbridge. The 78 year-old had been spraying weeds on his property in Maude before the accident happened. "He was riding up a pretty steep hill after spraying some weeds," a Work Safe spokesman said. "(The quad bike) has then tipped sideways with the man riding it." He was found by a family member."	Yes	Yes
39	Male	NSW	A REPORT is being prepared for the NSW Coroner following the death of a man who crashed his quad bike in bushland on the Far South Coast. The 39-year-old from Pemboka, near Bega, was riding with a group of others along the Indian Head Fire Trail in the Wadbilliga National Park when the accident occurred. On the return trip from One Tree Lookout, the man's 2005 Honda quad bike left the trail and struck a tree. Emergency services were contacted but the man was pronounced dead at the scene.	No	No
33	Female	QLD	A WOMAN has been killed while riding on a quad bike in a stormwater drain in central Queensland. The woman, 33, and a man, 30, were riding the bike in the drain at Blackwater yesterday between 4am and 5.10am when they rammed into a fence, police said. A resident found the pair at 5.15am. The woman, who was trapped under the bike, was declared dead at the scene. The man was found nearby with non life-threatening injuries. He was transported to Rockhampton Hospital for treatment.	No	No
24	Male	NT	A 24-year-old man from Herbert, in Darwin's rural area, had been camping at Gunn Point, 36km northeast of Darwin, with friends for the long weekend, when he rolled his quad bike early yesterday morning. Police said the young man, who would have celebrated his 25th birthday next month, had been riding his quad bike along the beach about 3am when it rolled.	Yes	No
17	Male	TAS	A BOY, 17, was killed when his all-terrain vehicle collided with a train on a private road in Tasmania's north. The teenager failed to stop at a stop sign on a private driveway and rode into the path of a train carrying cement at Spreyton, just south of Devonport, about midday yesterday, police said. He was thrown under the train and died instantly, police said.	No	Unknown

Age	Sex	State	Description of Event	Rollover Yes or No	Farm Yes or No
53	Male	VIC	An Edi Upper resident was killed in what police believe was an accidental shooting on Friday morning. Police said the 53 year old had been carrying a shotgun on a 4WD quad bike on his property. And he said he was found fatally wounded on his quad bike, with the vehicle still in neutral. The circumstances certainly suggest it was accidental," police said. This unfortunate incident emphasises the risk of using firearms while driving, or on a vehicle."	No	Yes
68	Male	WA	A well-known South West farmer has died in a quad bike rollover. A Work Safe spokeswoman said the 68yr old was found dead by a family member on Sunday underneath his quad bike. He is believed to have been moving cows when the accident happened.	Yes	Yes

Source: NFIDC Media Monitors Database 01/01/10-31/12/10

### Non-fatal Injury

There were an additional 43 non-fatal quad bike related injury events reported in the Australian print media in 2010. Table 2 provides a summary of the quad bike related non-fatal injury events:

- There were six children involved in quad bike related injury events, five of these children required hospitalisation for their injuries.
- Of the 43 reported injury events, location was unable to be determined for twelve cases. Of the remaining 31 cases, 18 (58%) occurred on-farm and thirteen (42%) in a non-farming setting.
- Information was available in only 28 of the 43 injury cases in relation to the event being a rollover or non-rollover. Of these 28 cases, rollovers accounted for ten (36%) of the reported non-fatal injury cases whereas non-rollovers accounted for 18 (64%) of the cases.

**Table 2:** Quad bike related non-fatal injury events in Australia as reported in Australian print media 2010

State	Age	Sex	Description of Event	Rollover Yes or No	Farm Yes or No
NSW	58	Female	A WOMAN was hospitalised with leg injuries yesterday after rolling a quad bike on a Bowraville property. Ambulance officers treated the 58-year-old for compound fractures on a local farm at about 3.30pm. She was taken to hospital in a stable condition.	Unknown	Yes
NSW	28	Male	A MAN, 28, was in a serious but stable condition in hospital yesterday after he was thrown from a quad bike, which then rolled on him. The accident happened at Gloucester about 530pm on Saturday, at a property on Gloucester Tops Road. The quad bike was rounding a left-hand bend when the rider was thrown from the vehicle, landing heavily before the bike rolled onto him. The victim was not wearing a helmet, police said. Family and friends at the scene administered first aid until NSW Ambulance paramedics arrived and transferred the man to Gloucester Hospital. He was airlifted to John Hunter Hospital where he underwent surgery.	No	Yes
TAS	22	Female	A 22-YEAR-old woman was taken to the Royal Hobart Hospital in a serious condition after a car and quad bike collided on the Bass Hwy near Brittons Swamp about 11.15 yesterday morning. The woman was initially taken to the Smithton District Hospital but was later transferred to the North West Regional Hospital in Burnie and then to the Royal Hobart Hospital. The woman had a head injury and was reported to be in a serious but stable condition. She was riding the bike in an easterly direction and collided with the car when she turned into a driveway. She was thrown from the bike.	No	No
QLD	25	Male	A MAN received serious chest and neck injuries in a quad bike accident in Mount Isa on Saturday afternoon. The incident took place at 3pm in a CEC Quarry off Lake Moondarra Rd in Kalkadoon. The bike rider, 25, was taken to Mount Isa hospital.	Unknown	No
QLD	51	Male	THE RACQ CareFlight helicopter airlifted a 51-year-old man to hospital after a quad bike crash near Kilkivan yesterday. The helicopter was tasked to the scene 50km south of Kilkivan about 3pm. RACQ Care Flight air crewman said the man received injuries to his abdomen and was also suffering from chest pain. The man was airlifted to Toowoomba Hospital in a stable condition.	Unknown	Unknown
VIC	16	Male	The first involved a 16 year old boy in Seaton, where he came off a quad bike at about 3pm. The boy was taken to Latrobe Regional Hospital with leg injuries.	Unknown	Unknown
NSW	21	Male	Walcha property on Monday afternoon- About 5.45pm, a 21-year-old farmhand was flown to Tamworth Hospital with head injuries and a suspected broken arm. It is believed the man had been riding a quad bike, which flipped and landed on top of him. He is reported to be in a stable condition.	Yes	Yes
QLD	?	Male	A QUAD bike rider allegedly slammed into the front of a freight train at a level crossing before riding his tattered bike 500m up the road and calling an ambulance to take himself and a passenger to hospital.	No	No
QLD	?	Male		No	No

State	Age	Sex	Description of Event	Rollover Yes or No	Farm Yes or No
NSW	48	Male	A 48-YEAR-OLD Bilbul man has suspected spinal injuries after being thrown off a quad bike. Sometime on Thursday afternoon Griffith police believe the man was riding the bike on his property when he drove into a ditch and was thrown. Just before 6.30pm he was located by his son still in the ditch. He was taken to Griffith Hospital and airlifted to Sydney in a serious, but stable condition.	No	Yes
QLD	70	Male	A 70-YEAR-OLD man suffered minor injuries when he crashed a quad bike into a fence at a property at Djuan, north west of Crows Nest yesterday. The accident happened at 12.20pm and the man was taken by ambulance to Crows Nest medical Centre.	Unknown	Yes
QLD	?	Unknown	Two people were taken to Townsville Hospital after rolling a quad bike on the beach at Rollingstone last night. One person was treated for head injuries and a second person for a shoulder injury following the 6.56pm crash.	Yes	No
QLD	?	Unknown		Yes	No
NSW	?	Female	A woman was airlifted to The Tweed Hospital after a quad bike rollover on Sunday afternoon. The Westpac Life Saver Rescue Helicopter attended the incident at Bilambil Heights about 4.10pm where the woman had suffered multiple injuries.	Yes	Unknown
NT	25	Male	A 25 man has been wheelchair-bound ever since he crashed while riding the bike at Dundee beach late on March 23. The rugby player was not found until dawn the following day. He said he was riding at night when heavy rain hit and he was thrown off his bike at the corner of Mermaid and Andreas avenues. Alcohol or speed were not believed to be factors in the crash.	No	No
TAS	29	Male	A 29-year-old man was taken to the Launceston General Hospital after two quad bikes collided near Bridport yesterday. The man was with friends at West Sandy Point when collision happened. The accident occurred about noon and the injured man was flown in the police helicopter from the beach location to Bridport. Tasmania Police said the man's injuries were not considered life threatening.	No	No
TAS	24	Male	About 6.30pm the Westpac Police Rescue Helicopter airlifted a 24-year old man injured in a crash between a quad bike and a van on Bruny Island. The man, who is from Coningham, was treated by Tasmanian Ambulance officers before being taken to the sports oval at Alonnah and airlifted to the Royal Hobart Hospital, where he was in a stable condition last night.	No	No
NSW	6	Male	A YOUNG boy escaped serious injury in a quad bike accident at his Rossmore home on Christmas Day. The boy, 6, was flown by helicopter to the Sydney Children's Hospital at Randwick. He was not wearing a helmet when he lost control of the quad bike and fell off as it accelerated across the property, injuring his head and neck. His parents saw the accident and called for help about 6.10pm. Ambulance crews called the CareFlight trauma team who treated the boy as he was flown to Randwick. He was in a stable condition when he arrived at the hospital and has since been released.	No	Yes

State	Age	Sex	Description of Event	Rollover Yes or No	Farm Yes or No
NSW	28	Male	A 28-YEAR-OLD man was flown to John Hunter Hospital with suspected spinal injuries after an accident near Yarrawitch yesterday. Ambulance crews reportedly responded to the scene, where the man had fallen off his quad bike. His condition was not known.	Unknown	Unknown
NSW	24	Male	At 2pm on November 13 Ambulance officers were called to Mozart Road, Oberon where a 24-year-old Sydney man had fallen from a quad bike. He was transported to Oberon Hospital with head, chest and spinal injuries before being transported by helicopter in a serious condition to Royal North Shore hospital.	No	Unknown
NSW	54	Male	A MAN, 54, was flown to John Hunter Hospital after sustaining face, chest and abdomen injuries when he came off a quad bike on a property near Wingen yesterday afternoon.	No	Yes
QLD	37	Male	A 37-YEAR-old man sustained back injuries after a quad bike crash at a property 37km south-west of Bollon yesterday at 2:40pm.	Unknown	Yes
QLD	13	Female	A 13-YEAR-old girl was flown from a property near Nebo to the Mackay Base Hospital yesterday afternoon, after sustaining a laceration to her thigh from a quad bike accident.	Unknown	Yes
NSW	7	Male	A seven-year-old boy was in a critical condition in Sydney's Westmead Hospital yesterday after the quad bike he was riding fell on top of him at a Laguna property. Police said the boy's father came over the top of a hill and found the quad bike lying on top of the boy.	Yes	Yes
NSW	20	Female	A 20-year-old woman was last night undergoing surgery after being airlifted to Westmead Hospital in a critical condition yesterday. The woman was involved in an accident involving a quad bike on the Muronbung Road near Ballimore about 11.20am. It is believed the woman was on a quad bike which was struck by a utility.	No	No
QLD	65	Male	A 65-YEAR-OLD man was taken to Toowoomba Hospital with chest and possible spinal injuries yesterday after he fell off a quad bike on a property north of Oakey.	No	Yes
QLD	20	Male	A QUAD bike rider ended up with his bike on top of him yesterday after an accident at Gordonvale. The man, in his 20s, was taken to Cairns Base Hospital by ambulance, where he was treated for a shoulder injury. An ambulance spokesman said he rolled his bike about 2.30pm.	Yes	Unknown



State	Age	Sex	Description of Event	Rollover Yes or No	Farm Yes or No
NSW	36	Male	A SECOND Westpac Rescue Helicopter had to be diverted to the region yesterday as a result of separate quad bike accidents. The Newcastle-based chopper was sent to Bingara to assist a 36-year-old man with severe neck injuries.	Unknown	Unknown
NSW	63	Male	The Tamworth helicopter flew a 63-year-old man to the John Hunter Hospital after a quad bike accident at Spring Ridge. The 63-year-old suffered severe pelvic injuries.	Unknown	Unknown
QLD	23	Male	A MAN who crashed his quad bike on the highway early Saturday morning was taken to hospital with a shoulder injury. The 23-year-old male was taken to Charters Towers Hospital by ambulance on Saturday following the 3.41am crash which occurred on the Lynd Highway not far from the township.	Unknown	No
QLD	7	Male	A seven-year-old girl was seriously injured when a quad bike rolled on her at Moffatdale on Saturday evening. She was stabilised by local paramedics in the paddock before an emergency helicopter flew her to a Brisbane hospital.	Yes	Yes
NSW	>15yrs	Male	Emergency crews were called out to Woodenbong again yesterday morning when a male rider was thrown about 20 metres while riding an ATV. He suffered arm and leg injuries.	No	Unknown
QLD	>15yrs	Female	POLICE said alcohol was involved when a female came off a quad bike in Catherine Avenue, Yeppoon, on Friday at 11.33pm.	No	No
VIC	53	Female	A FARM hand received serious head injuries yesterday morning in a quad bike accident at Woolsthorpe. The 53-year-old woman was flown by air helicopter to The Alfred hospital in Melbourne where she was in a critical condition last night. It was believed the vehicle hit a ditch or a drain on the farm.	Yes	Yes
QLD	21	Male	A 21-YEAR-OLD man injured in a quad bike accident near Moranbah yesterday remained in a serious condition in Townsville General Hospital.	Unknown	Unknown
TAS	39	Female	A WOMAN badly injured in a quad bike accident was flown to Hobart yesterday afternoon. The Tasmania Police Westpac Rescue Helicopter was sent to Gardners Bay in the Huon Valley after the 39-year-old Gardners Bay woman injured her chest.	Unknown	Unknown

State	Age	Sex	Description of Event	Rollover Yes or No	Farm Yes or No
QLD	11	Female	AN 11-year-old girl sustained shoulder and neck injuries after a quad bike crash yesterday afternoon. The incident happened at a property on Hogarth Road, Felton about 4pm.	Unknown	Yes
QLD	50	Male	A MAN believed to be in his 50s was taken to Rockhampton Hospital with facial injuries after a quad bike accident at Milman, north of Rockhampton yesterday.	Unknown	Yes
VIC	55	Female	A woman riding a quad bike across a paddock in far north eastern Victoria has ended up under a cow. When the 55-year-old collided with the cow near Tallandoon yesterday morning, her all-terrain vehicle flipped over and landed on top of her. But that wasn't all the startled cow lost its footing and toppled over, pinning the woman to the ground. An Ambulance Victoria spokeswoman said the woman suffered a serious head wound and a possible back injury.	No	Yes
QLD	4	Male	A FOUR-YEAR-OLD boy fell off the back of a quad bike at Yabulu about 7 o'clock last night. Ambulance crews were called to assist but the boy was not seriously hurt.	No	Unknown
NSW	52	Male	A Blighty farmer thought he was going to die when he was flicked into a drain on his property and pinned down by his motorbike on Saturday. He was on his way to round up some stray cows when his quad bike rolled into the drain.	Yes	Yes
NT	20	Male	The 20-year-old man had been riding his quad bike along the beach at Gunn Point, 36km northeast of Darwin, at 1am yesterday morning, when he struck rocks and was thrown off. The young man, who was not wearing a helmet, suffered severe head injuries hitting his head on the rocks.	No	No
NSW	20	Female	A WOMAN, 20, was flown by Hunter Westpac rescue helicopter to John Hunter Hospital yesterday after she rolled a quad bike on a Jerrys Plains property.	Yes	Yes

Source: NFIDC Media Monitors Database 01/01/10-31/12/10

## **Discussion**

This study includes all quad bike related deaths and non-fatal injury events reported in Australian print media in 2010. Whilst providing a timely snapshot of quad bike related injury prevalence, a limitation of this process is that not all quad bike related injury events are reported in the print media. Therefore, these data are likely to underestimate the true prevalence of deaths and injury associated with quad bikes.

An additional limitation is the depth of available information surrounding events where the case has not been closed by the coroner. As at January 17th 2011, only two of the nine deaths in the Quad Bike Deaths Register for 2010 had been closed by the coroner and consequently, more information surrounding the circumstances leading to these deaths will be available in due course.

This brief report further supports other studies that highlight rollovers as being a leading causal event commonly associated with quad bike related death.<sup>1</sup> Though not statistically significant due to the small sample size, on a proportional basis rollovers are associated with more deaths (50%) than non-fatal incidents (36%). These results suggest that there is an increased likelihood of a fatal outcome in the event of a quad bike rollover.

## **Conclusions**

Media monitoring continues to provide a useful mechanism for the examination of quad bike related injury prevalence in Australia. When used in conjunction with NCIS searches, it also proves to be a beneficial data quality assurance measure. The data presented in this report relating to the high proportion of quad bike rollover deaths vs non-fatal rollover incidents, particularly in the farm setting, clearly highlight the need to improve design to ensure the protection of the operator in the case of the machine rolling.

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<sup>1</sup> Herde E, Lower T. Farm injury related fatalities in Australia 2003-2006. 2011. Australian Centre for Agricultural Health and Safety. Moree, NSW. (Available at [www.aghealth.org.au](http://www.aghealth.org.au))